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The Black Cat

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The Black Cat

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Many a mortal has dollars up his sleeve and doesn't know it. The head of many a man or woman holds the foundation, the framework, the incident or plot of a money-bringing short story. The trouble is how to write it and where to sell it. Those two perplexing questions can be practically and profitably answered by reading THE BLACK CAT each month and joining THE BLACK CAT CLUB (see page 44) and studying the stories contained in a volume entitled "The Red Hot Dollar" which comprises twelve of the best stories ever published in the THE BLACK CAT.

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As Organic Iron—Nuxated Iron

United States Judge Atkinson Gives Opinion

Careful investigation by physicians among druggists and patients has revealed the fact that there are thousands of people taking iron who do not distinguish between organic iron and metallic iron, and that such persons often fail to obtain the vital energy, strength and endurance which they seek, simply because they have taken the wrong form of iron.

Therefore, physicians mentioned below, advise those who feel the need of a strength and blood builder to go to their family doctors and obtain a prescription calling for organic iron—Nuxated Iron—and present this to their druggist so that there may be no question about obtaining the proper article. But if they do not wish to go to the trouble of getting a prescription for Nuxated Iron then be sure to look on the label and see that the words NUXATED IRON are printed thereon—not Nux and Iron nor any other form of Iron, but Nuxated Iron.

The remarkable results produced by Nuxated Iron and its widespread sale (it being estimated that over three million people annually are to-day using it), has led to the offering of numerous substitutes, and these physicians say that health officials and doctors everywhere should caution the public against accepting substitutes in medicines and they especially warn against accepting substitutes for Nuxated Iron, which, instead of being organic iron may be nothing more than a metallic iron compound which may in some cases produce more harm than good. The widespread publication of the above information, has been suggested by Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital; Dr. Ferdinand King, New York Physician and Medical Author and others, so that the public may be informed on this subject and protected from the use of metallic iron under the delusion that it is Nuxated Iron or at least something as good as Nuxated Iron.

Judge G. W. Atkinson

United States Judge G. W. Atkinson of the Court of Claims, Washington, D. C., says: "It is without hesitation that I recommend Nuxated Iron to persons who in the stress of physical or mental labors have permitted the system to become debilitated, the body exhausted or the nerves run down. It has restored my appetite and my vitality. I feel that I have dropped off the burden of months of toil in the few weeks that I have been following the very simple directions for the use of Nuxated Iron."

It is surprising how many people suffer from iron deficiency and do not know it. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of Nuxated Iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength and see how much you have gained.

MANUFACTURERS' NOTE---Nuxated Iron which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians is not a secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed in this city by all good druggists.

The Lowe Observatory
Edgar Lucien Larkin, Director
Los Angeles, Calif., Dec. 6, 1916.
Mr. C. F. Haanel, St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
Your booklet, "Master-Key," ought to be expanded into a book. Its teachings that Mind is the all-dominating creative force is precisely in line with the wonders of the most recent psychology. All persons having desks should have this pamphlet thereon. And it would be a fitting pocket companion.
EDGAR LUCIEN LARKIN,
Author of the Matchless Altar of the Soul

First Nautilus Center
160 Claremont Ave., New York
New York, Nov. 18, 1916.
I have made a thorough examination of the little booklet which you so appreciatively have called the "Master-Key," and can unhesitatingly endorse it and its teachings.
In this pamphlet of only a few pages you have led a hungry world to the threshold and placed in their hands a "key" with which the understanding ones may unlock the door and enter "The Secret Places of the Most High," and enjoy the abundance of all good to be found therein. With best wishes,
AGNES MAE GLASGOW, M. D.

THE MASTER MIND
Annie Rix Militz, Editor
Los Angeles, Calif.
The "Master-Key" is an excellent booklet of strong, scientific reaching of the allness of mind, not lacking in Spirituality, yet especially appealing to the intellect desiring logical proof of Truth.

Home Life Insurance Company of New York,
James Lee Bost, General Agent
Washington, D. C., Dec. 29, 1916.
Mr. CHAS. F. HAANEL,
St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
Your little booklet, entitled "The Master-Key," has been received and I had great pleasure in studying it carefully. It is very clear and concise, yet forceful presentation of the big subject handled, and shows a very wide study of the absolute teachings and deep understanding of the same. Very truly yours,
JAMES LEE BOST.

The Weltmer Institute of Suggestive Therapeutics
Nevada, Mo., Dec. 17, 1916.
CHAS. F. HAANEL, St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
"The Master-Key" gives a most scientific, direct and comprehensive presentation of the constructive power of thought.
Your most sincere friend,
SIDNEY A. WELTMER, Pres.

Which can unlock the Secret Chamber of Success, can throw wide the doors which seem to bar men from the Treasure House of Nature, and bids those enter and partake who are Wise enough to Understand and broad enough to Weigh the Evidence, firm enough to Follow Their Own Judgment and strong enough to Make the Sacrifice Exacted.

The International New Thought Alliance, General Headquarters
Washington, D. C., Nov. 14, 1916.
CHAS. F. HAANEL,, St. Louis, Mo.
My Dear Mr. Haanel:
I have read your little booklet, "The Master-Key," carefully, and think it very good indeed. I am enclosing stamps for a few more copies, which I wish to give to those whom I know to need just the dynamic message which your book contains. Yours sincerely,
GRACE WILSON, Sec.

Unity School of Christianity
Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 14, 1916.
Dear Mr. Haanel:
Your little book, entitled "Master-Key," is a very practical presentation of the power of mind in its various fields of action. It conveys to one the conviction that Mind is All Powerful and All Present.
Faithfully,
CHARLES FILLMORE, Pres.

The Day Star Publishing Co.
Topeka, Kansas, Feb. 15, 1917.
"The Master-Key" is the answer to the demand "knock and it shall be opened," and truly it will open the "Gate Beautiful" leading into every "temple of the living God." All the world seek this marvelous key. Oh ye who sit in darkness "Knock"—use this "Master-Key" and the door shall be opened unto you, revealing to your eyes of flesh, peace, power and plenty.
LIDA HALLIE HARDY, Pres.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 21, 1916.
I have just received and read your booklet called "The Master-Key." It is exceedingly thoughtful and in many ways masterful. I thank you for the privilege of reading it and will file it away with my strong presentations of the philosophy of life. I am truly yours,
GRANVILLE LOWTHER.

FREE! There is no charge for the Master Key. It is FREE

Charles F. Haanel,
429 Granite Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.
Send me a copy of the Master-Key FREE!
Name.....
Address.....
Post Office.....

NOTE—There is a Master Key for every reader of The Black Cat. Be sure you get yours!

By STEPHEN McKENNA

Which concerns the strategy of the Examining Chaplain and the persistence of Mr. Elias Fenchurch. The latter is of the "ready-cooked-and-predigested" school of food manufacturers and therefore qualified to write a pamphlet on the failure of the churches.

IN the interests of apostolic poverty some one had to travel third class, so the Examining Chaplain stripped away a blue and white label marked "Ladies" and distributed the Bishop's great-coat, the Bishop's hand-bag and the Bishop himself evenly over the seats. Then he sought out an unoccupied first-class smoking compartment, ordered himself a luncheon basket and settled down in comfort for the five hours' journey to Blacktown. During the past fortnight in London the Bishop had kept him hard at work, and this seemed somehow outside the bargain. Ordinary men worked six days a week; financiers made shift with four or five; he had been drawn to Holy Orders, because the clergy seemed to live a life that was six-sevenths holiday. This appeared to leave time for ample betting, and the Examining Chaplain had been interested in the turf from an early age. Several years in an industrial town demonstrated the inadequacy of the theory, but the Examining Chaplain persisted in thinking that he was right in principle. Few men resisted or evaded work more skillfully than he did.

Hardly was the rug round his knees and his head cosily nestled in the corner than he was roused by a current of cold air, followed by the fall of a heavy body across his outstretched legs. The newcomer picked himself and his hand luggage from the floor and turned an angry, red face upon the Examining Chaplain.

"You've no right to put your feet where other people are bound to fall over them!" he exclaimed, dusting his clothes and pressing a dent out of the side of his hat.

"You've no right to fall about where you might know I should be bound to put my feet," retorted the Examining Chaplain, as he rubbed his bruised shin.

The newcomer chewed his moustache for a moment and held himself in check with an effort. He was a choleric, middle-aged man with a suggestion of pertinacity and commercial success.

"I won't say what I was going to," he muttered with a gulp. "Your cloth protects you. That's about all it does do."

"I coxed the Varsity boat, before I took orders," said the Examining Chaplain invitingly. He might have added that the ladies' colleges were wont to assemble on the tow-path to hear him at work.

His companion's face lightened.

"Are you Brace-Preston?" he enquired with civil interest. "I say, forgive me if I was a bit short-tempered. I know you very well by reputation of course; you're Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Blacktown, aren't you? My name's Fenchurch. Fenchurch's Invalid Food, you know."

The Examining Chaplain would have preferred sleep to any man's conversation, but he would have preferred anyone's conversation to that of Mr. Elias Fenchurch. To him, too, his companion was known by reputation. Not content with adding to the world's load of suffering by selling the most unpalatable pre-digested invalid food on the market, he allowed his mind to range ingeniously over possibilities of attacking whole classes that were at present strong and happy. A healthy body, he was at pains to point out, availed little without a healthy mind. For years he set himself to improve the public health of mind.

As with so many men, the war gave him

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his opportunity. Exhortations to a godly life fell on deaf ears until the publication of his "Divine Scourge." Therein most of his readers found that their lives had been empty even when they had not been vicious; the remainder exhibited a horrified interest in learning of the always empty and sometimes vicious lives of their neighbors. The war, it appeared, had been sent to clean up all that. The pamphlet had a gigantic success, and Mr. Fenchurch followed it up with "The Failure of the Churches," in which the blame was laid on the clergy. His hundred thousand readers had felt all along that the blame ought to be put on someone else. Mr. Fenchurch believed that the lessons of the war were not being learned; he was at work on a third pamphlet, "Though One Rose from the Dead," but what he wanted was personal contact with the leaders of religious thought in England, and he proclaimed his ambition to the Examining Chaplain.

"I must meet your Bishop," he announced in a tone that did not invite a refusal.

"You'll find him two doors down," said the Examining Chaplain eagerly.

"Oh, not yet," answered Mr. Fenchurch. "I want you to prepare the ground. Now in 'Though One Rose from the Dead' I've tried to show—"

He recited as much of the new pamphlet as he could remember. The Examining Chaplain was appalled by the tenacity of his memory and consoled only by the thought that there was now no need even to cut the pages of the wretched book. As the train drew into Blacktown, however—it was two hours behind time, but Mr. Fenchurch was a man of rare vitality—the subject was not allowed to rest.

"I've a spare set of proofs," said Mr. Fenchurch. "I'll send them along to the Palace."

The following day the pamphlet was delivered by hand before breakfast. At noon Mr. Fenchurch telephoned to enquire whether the Examining Chaplain had read it. The Examining Chaplain professed to think that "One Rose from the Dead" was a ballad dedicated (by permission) to the Bishop and said that his Lordship suspected an undercurrent of unpleasant suggestion in the second verse. Thereupon Mr. Fenchurch became disputatious, and the Examining Chaplain hung up the receiver. Three times in the course of the afternoon and twice during the dinner Mr. Fenchurch returned to the attack. The Examining Chaplain was compelled to remind him that there was but one line to the Palace and that Mr. Fenchurch was monopolizing it; then he wrapped the bell-hammer in newspaper and retired to his bedroom.

In the early days of Fenchurch's Invalid Food the manufacturer and proprietor had been also the advertising agent and traveller. Mr. Fenchurch had simulated heart attacks in the main streets of every town in the Midlands and North; he had partially recovered in sight of interested spectators, crawled from the gutter to a convenient lamp-post and, leaning against it with collar unbuttoned and tie unstrapped, had voraciously attacked one of the afterwards famous semi-lunar tins of the Invalid Food. (The tin was then tossed carelessly towards the spectators, and Mr. Fenchurch would spring to his feet, exclaiming: "It's made a new man of me!—What has! Why, Fenchurch's Invalid Food, of course!") As traveller, he had figuratively always and actually sometimes thrust the food down the resisting throats of grocers and chemists from Trent to Tweed. Men, hired for the purpose, lay in wait for him and his kind behind glass shutters, which they opened to enquire his business before passing him inside. A patent and unpalatable Invalid Food was scheduled as reasonable cause for refusing admission, but before long the janitors passed Mr. Fenchurch into the private offices without hesitation, lest they should be impelled a second time to taste Fenchurch's Invalid Food. By character and training, therefore, he was not easy to discourage.

Within three days of their meeting, the Examining Chaplain had received complimentary copies of "The Divine Scourge" and "The Failure of the Churches," which were accompanied by voluminous typewritten explanations of the lessons which Mr. Fenchurch (but no other leader of

religious thought) had learned from the war and the teaching which he considered the Bishop of Blacktown should inculcate in the priests and deacons of his diocese. These were followed by daily supplements, an invitation to a meat tea and four attempted calls, which the Examining Chaplain was never well enough to receive. After the fourth failure Mr. Fenchurch returned to the telephone and enquired in terms what his Lordship thought of every chapter in each pamphlet and what kind of co-operation the two of them could bring about. Once the Examining Chaplain hung up the receiver in the middle of one of his own sentences, to suggest that Exchange had cut him off. The second time he pretended to be unable to hear. The third time he placed the receiver on the table and went back to breakfast, leaving Mr. Fenchurch to declaim into vast emptiness.

The danger in telephone warfare is its costliness. A man, reflected the Examining Chaplain, cannot cut the enemy's communications without cutting his own. On the evening when he wrapped the bell-hammer in old newspaper, a curate in the Clergy House of St. Antony was trying to get through with a certainty for the Stewards' Cup at Northwich; throughout the morning when the receiver lay spiked and useless on the table, the Examining Chaplain particularly wanted to put a sovereign both ways on "Little Boy Blue" for the three-thirty at Granchester. It chanced that the St. Antony curate's favorite did not run at all and that "Little Boy Blue" never finished, but the Examining Chaplain felt that Mr. Fenchurch had no right to interfere with the destiny of comparative strangers.

"This telephone wasn't put in for his amusement," he grumbled. (It had been installed under protest by the Bishop on his Chaplain's stating that he could not get through the day's work without it). "Apparently the only way of keeping any control of it is to tap him at the source."

The Fenchurch Invalid Food Company Limited appeared in the telephone directory with the number Central 6000 (Private Branch Exchange), and in that Exchange most of the outside world stopped short at the snub of the operator. Venturesome spirits occasionally stated their business and were brought into procrastinated contact with Mr. Fenchurch's secretary. It was a fixed rule with Mr. Fenchurch—and a formative element in his business success—to protect himself from the irrelevant interruptions of any idler who chanced to know that the number of the most private extension was fifteen. His wife knew it, the works manager knew it, but to a third person he had never confided it until, in this enthusiasm, he pressed the Examining Chaplain to lunch with him any day and indicate his choice by telephone.

"Central six thousand," said the Examining Chaplain.

After a few moments an indistinct voice murmured, "Fenchurch Food."

"Extension one five," he pursued with a grim smile. The device for tapping Mr. Fenchurch's wire at source had come to him by sudden inspiration. He was constituting himself a trunk call from Lambeth Palace; Mr. Fenchurch wanted to be brought into contact with the leaders of religious thought. The archbishop, after a sleepless night spent in devouring Mr. Fenchurch's pamphlets wished to meet him in person. Would Mr. Fenchurch come to London at once and stay with him for a day or two, while they concerted their attack? There was the glint of battle in the Examining Chaplain's eyes, as he pictured Mr. Fenchurch's five hour journey to London and five hour journey back the same night; his reception at the Palace rather strained the imagination; on reflection it was possible that he would not return the same night.

"Poor Archbishop!" murmured the Examining Chaplain and prepared his voice for the nasal used in intoning the sentences.

"Hullo!" came faintly over the wires.

"Is that Mr. Fenchurch?"

"Mr. Fenchurch is out at lunch. Who is that, please?"

The Examining Chaplain countered the question with another. "When will he be back? This is very urgent."

"Not before three. Will you leave a message?"

The Examining Chaplain picked up the directory and flung it on the floor in exasperation. The gossamer dream of Lambeth and Mr. Fenchurch, pamphlets in hand, arriving in invitation to discuss with the Archbishop the failure of the Church, dissolved into the air whence it was born. And at three Mr. Fenchurch's voice might be expected once more at the telephone.

"Will you leave a message?"

"It's quite unimportant," he answered.

"Who shall I say rang him up?"

The Examining Chaplain reflected. By mentioning Lambeth Palace he could, of course, keep Mr. Fenchurch at the telephone most of the afternoon waiting for his trunk call. On the other hand, Lambeth Palace had not called him, and to say that it had was a clear cut, black and white perversion of the truth—the sort of thing that was not done among Examining Chaplains.

"Will you ask him to ring up Eastern 494?" he asked.

Filling a pipe, he sat down in front of the fire to wonder chucklingly who Eastern 494 might be and, further, what contact of souls would be established between Eastern 494 and Mr. Elias Fenchurch. As he wondered, he ceased to chuckle. Laying down his pipe he gathered the torn sheets of the disgraced directory and smoothed them tenderly on his knee; then he crossed the room on tiptoe and picked up the receiver.

"City 909, please.—Is that Snowdon's Iron Works? I want to speak to Mr. Snowdon, please. Is he out at lunch?—Oh! Well, will you ask him to ring up Central six thousand, extension one five, say three o'clock? Thank you! Good-bye.—City 826, please.—Is that the Cornwallis Cutlery Company? Mr. Cornwallis, please. He's dead? Dear, dear! Well it's the common lot. Fifteen years? Put me on to one of the more active partners.—Oh, they're all out at lunch? Well, will you ask the first one who comes in to ring up Central six thousand, extension one five? Say about three fifteen. Good-bye.—City 8692.—Is that the North of England Fire and Life? Oh, I want to speak to the chief actuary, please—out at lunch? Oh, will you ask him to ring up Central six thousand, extension one five. at about three-thirty? Thank you! Good-bye."

The Examining Chaplain, who had coxed the 'Varsity boat before he took Orders, had a voice not easily tired. On the other hand, when it was time to prepare for Evensong, his left arm was decidedly stiff from the effort of holding the receiver to his ear.

"He had no business to fall about where he might have known I was bound to put my feet," reflected the Examining Chaplain, as he rubbed his stiff arm and hunted for his cassock. Then he went back to the telephone. There was just time to tell the St. Antony Clergy House that "Maid Marion" hadn't an earthly for the two o'clock.

NEXT month: CHILDREN OF TWILIGHT *by Charlie Alexander,* a variation of the eternal triangle. There are a man, a woman and a tiger. The issue is clearly drawn. It is either the gentleman or the tiger: the former seeking a companion, the latter looking for a square meal. The inevitable fight to a finish is so graphically described that you will wonder whether the author was one of the principals or had a ringside seat.

THE PURPLE STONE OF DAMACHAIN

By JOAN STEELE

The way of a maid with a man is past understanding. At least he doesn't understand it, and it is quite probable that she doesn't either.

HE keen wind from the bay below Kilmachain whipped the long strands of Maire Conlon's black hair across the boy's eager face. With a longing look at the pure beauty of the profile so near his own, he lifted one silky lock to his lips and kissed it. Angrily, the girl flung away.

"You've no call to be kissing my hair, Michael Duveen." Her gray eyes were dark with anger.

Michael dropped her hair with a sickening feeling of helplessness against her displeasure, and watched her expressive face anxiously for a sign of relenting.

"You know I've loved you with all the life that's in me, ever since you came from Connemara," he ventured tremulously. "Don't ask me for what I can't in honor give you."

"If you loved me truly, you'd not be refusing me a trumpery little bit of stone to wear around my neck." She steadily kept her gaze from the boy's pleading eyes.

"Maire," he at last said desperately, "it isn't the value of the stone I'd refuse you, but since you're strange to Kilmachain, you perhaps don't know what it means to me. My father always wore it around his neck the time he'd be going on the sea, the way its magic power should bring him back alive and whole. It's a rare charm, the purple stone, against the ills of shipwreck and the perils of the sea."

"A fine, strong lad like you should not be fearing shipwreck, and you the son of a fisherman, born in a red-sailed ship." Maire's lip curled scornfully at the idea.

Michael whitened under the taunt.

"You know in your heart that I'm not afraid, Maire Conlon! The stone doesn't mean so much to me as it did to my father. I'll confess that freely, but I've worn it ever since my mother put it round my neck with her own trembling hands, the night my father was brought home drowned for the lack of it, and green fires were seen in Damachain's Mount on the hill."

"I'm no believer in trumpery stuff like that—I wouldn't wear your fool stone now, if you were to beg me!" Maire turned swiftly away from him and started down the path, but with a speculative look in her eyes which deepened to satisfaction as he followed hastily.

"Listen to me, only a moment, Maire—"

She shook off his detaining hand. "There's no joy to me in the sound of empty words." She gazed out unconcernedly over a tumbling sea of gray water, and narrowed her eyes at the distant horizon.

"But, Maire, it was really my mother's. She was the one found it first, when she was a young girl like yourself, up in the ruins on the hill they call Damachain's Mount, shining purple and smooth in a heap of gray stones, and she was the one gave it to my father the day they plighted troth, to keep him safe forever from the dangers of the sea."

A strange light shone in the girl's eyes. She turned, with a sudden change of manner, and coaxingly held out her hand.

"Well, if I'm not to have it, I'm not. A good son always makes a bad lover. But you might let me hold it in my hand, just for a minute, the fairy stone."

Reluctantly, Michael drew the chain from his neck, and held it out to her. With a low laugh of delight she held it up admiringly. The smooth, heart-shaped stone glimmered with a wan purple glow.

"Oh, Michael, how beautiful it is!" Her eyes widened as she looked into its translucent depths. "It's the only sight of loveliness I've had to feast my eyes on, in all the barren grayness of this place, since the day I left the purple hills of Connemara to come here to Kilmachain."

"It isn't half so lovely as your own two eyes, Maire," he whispered softly. She drew away and held it up to her.

"How would it look shining on my neck, Michael?"

"It's a great queen of beauty you are, Maire, like the sorrowful Deirdre in the tale the old women tell the time they are gathered around a turf fire with the wind like a banshee in the hills."

Maire saw his troubled eyes and trembling hands and smiled.

"Michael," she whispered as she drew near to him, "I used to long for Connemara, where there were fine, tall men, and great lovers they were, too, handsome and straight as poplar trees; but you are fine and tall yourself, Michael, with a power of pretty words on your tongue."

"Maire—you don't mean—could I be your plighted lover truly?"

"You could, Michael, for one very little thing." The gray eyes were very near his own and the long, cool hair touched his flushed cheek. "If you plight your troth with the purple stone, Michael, the purple love-stone of Damachain."

"Maire—Maire, you must feel that I can't do that—it's wrong." He tried to move away, but she drew him down beside her on the brown grass of the wind-swept hill.

"Michael, it's great happiness for a man when he's a plighted lover." Pleadingly the slim, cool fingers rested on his arm.

He turned away from the beseeching face and threw a pebble out over the ruffled surface of the water.

"Michael"—Maire's voice was low and very sweet—"Michael, if you let me wear the purple stone, you can kiss me, now, if you like."

A deep flush spread over the boy's forehead as he leaned swiftly over until his lips met hers. At last she moved uneasily under his embrace and he released her, regarding her wonderingly as she clasped the trinket around her neck.

"Aren't you glad to see it shine so grandly, Michael?" Maire drew away to give him the full effect. Disregardfully, he leaned toward her again with impetuous haste. She sprang to her feet like a startled dryad and warded him off with outstretched hands.

"You said that I could—"

"And so you did once," she laughed provokingly.

He looked at her with stormy eyes. "It isn't a question of once, or twice, or any number of times, Maire Conlon. You may wear the stone now, and keep it, but you are my lover from this time forth, and you shall not gainsay me." He stepped up to her as she stood looking at him with frightened eyes and kissed her deliberately.

After an instant of suspended breath, Maire flung herself into his arms and returned his caress passionately.

"I love you—I do love you, Michael," she cried. "You are so strong I can't help myself at all."

He pressed her fingers to his cheek and looked at her with brooding tenderness. "And you, Maire, you are so white and fine I must cherish you with great care, as if you were the Queen Deirdre herself." With the fading light of the sun making a dim glory about their heads, they returned to the village as plighted lovers. Maire could not restrain a proud little toss of the head as they met one neighbor and another, who looked at them with unashamed curiosity at the sight of the high and mighty stranger from Connemara hanging on Michael's happy, protecting arm.

Maire looked after Michael as he passed from her door down the hilly road to his own house. She leaned her head wearily against the doorpost and sighed to herself in the gathering dusk. She had not expected love to come to her in this way. Michael had seemed so young and inexperienced, and now, in a few short minutes she had seen him grow to manhood before her very eyes. She fingered the smooth stone at her neck furtively and watched

its purple depths change and darken in the fitful light. Before she went into the firelight solitude of her cottage room, she slipped the token inside the open neck of her bodice although there were no eyes to spy on her secret in the house. Maire had lived alone from the day she had come from Connemara to take up her life in the gray desolation of Kilmachain, the lonely island in the western sea.

On a glowing morning a few days after the scene with Michael on the headland, Maire sat singing happily to herself as she knitted on her doorstep in the sun. Her thoughts were as happy as she could wish. Michael allowed himself to be completely dominated in everything, since his first feeble resistance in the matter of the purple stone. Dominion was the breath of life to Maire, and she smiled to herself as she felt the smooth warmth of the jewel where it lay beneath the lawn kerchief on her neck.

She looked up impatiently as the tall, buxom form of Nan Clancy obscured her light. Her reasons for disliking Nan were few, but sufficient. In the first place, Nan was more than ordinarily handsome; in the second, she had been openly courted by Michael before Maire's advent, the mere thought of which fact made Maire furiously jealous.

It was without any of these more subtle emotions that Nan ensconced herself comfortably on the step beside Maire without waiting for an invitation, and looked at her critically out of the corner of her eye.

"Well, Nan, what is on your mind?" Maire spoke as pleasantly as she could, as she stopped to pick up a stitch in the rough yarn.

"I suppose those be the socks you're after knitting for Michael for him to wear on his trip to the north for the mackerel fishing?" Nan tried in vain to keep a certain triumph out of her voice.

Maire's fingers tightened on the needles.

"Who said he was going a voyage?" She kept her eyes on the half-finished sock in her hand.

"I heard himself and Tim Colum talking of it down by the boats." Nan nodded in the direction of the landing beach. After a pause and a careful look at Maire's tense face she ventured a further remark. "Are you going to give him back the purple stone the way he'll be safe on the sea?"

Maire's hand flew to her neck apprehensively. She rose from her place on the step and confronted Nan tensely.

"Nan Clancy," her voice was low with suppressed anger, "I'll thank you to get off my doorstone and go to your own place. Whether I keep the purple stone, or whether it goes to Michael again, is something that concerns us two, and us only, and I'll be truly grateful the day the rest of you let us alone."

Nan rose with unperturbed calm and looked at Maire wonderingly.

"It's a strange woman you are, Maire Conlon, with more care for a bit of colored stone around your neck than for the great wealth of a strong man's love."

"It's jealousy you feel toward me, Nan Clancy, makes you say things the like of that!" Maire turned her attention resolutely to the work in her hands.

"It's not jealousy at all makes all Michael's friends sick with the regret to see a fine man so gone and foolish for a pretty face only." Nan strode away with disgust in the set of her strong shoulders. Maire looked after her uneasily; then her eyes narrowed as she saw Nan stop and greet Michael, who was mounting the hilly path with rapid strides. From Nan's animated gestures she guessed that she was relating the conversation just past; consequently she was glad when she saw Michael shake his head angrily and ascend the rest of the path rapidly, leaving Nan shaking her head after him forebodingly.

Maire had resumed her place on the doorstone as Michael flung himself panting at her feet.

"Believe me, Maire," he said breathlessly, "I didn't want you to hear about the fishing trip from anyone except myself."

Maire looked at him slowly. "Is it true that you are going?"

"I must, Maire, my dear. I'm sorry." Maire gently but firmly disengaged her hand from his and went on with her work. Michael continued eagerly: "You see, I haven't been out with the boats for a great

while, and the men will be getting restless if I don't lend a hand. with the news of a great run of mackerel from the north and every man who owns a net in Kilmachain anxious to get his share of the haul."

"When do you start out on this business?"

"To-morrow at dawn, they have decided at the shore." Michael's anxious eyes sought Maire's. She did not look up from her busy fingers. "I'm sorry it's so soon, Maire, just when we have been so happy."

"It's no great matter to me, Michael. I suppose you'll be wanting your stone against the perils of the sea?"

Michael looked troubled at the faint tinge of scorn in her voice.

"If you thought you'd feel safer if I had it with me—" He hesitated, longing for her to say the right thing.

Maire shrugged. "It's *your* safety we're talking about, Michael, not mine. You're the one will be on the sea." She loosed the stone from her bodice and held it out to him coldly. "Take it, if *you* will feel safer with it, Michael."

He looked at her in dumb misery; then he shook his head. "I couldn't now, Maire, not for anything." He rose awkwardly. Maire re-fastened the chain around her neck with a satisfied smile.

"I do love you, Michael, for not taking it from me, when they would all be so glad to see it gone." She rose and linked her arm in his. "Shall we be going down to the shore to see the boat you're going this great voyage in?"

As they went down the path together, Maire felt in her inner consciousness, the look of curious, questioning pain in Michael's eyes; but she chattered on, careless of his unresponsiveness and deaf to her own unease.

IT WAS the night of the day of Michael's departure with the fishing smack for the north. They had sailed away on a quiet gray sea with such favorable winds that they had soon been lost to view; and after a few idle comments to one another, the little group of watchers on the shore had dispersed to their several tasks and employments.

Seated on the settle before her cosy fire, while the wind, which had risen since the morning, blew in great gusts outside, Maire relived the scene of the departure with a sense of uneasy discomfort, an emotion entirely new to her. She remembered how silent Michael had been on the way down to the boats, and how even the eyes of the curious had been withdrawn when he had said good-bye to her. She fingered the glimmering purple thing on her neck with a sudden feeling of revulsion, and felt, with a certain wonder at herself, that she wished almost that she had given it back to Michael. Then she smiled at her childishness, and slipping the chain within her bodice, she set about a busy preparation of the evening meal in the vain endeavor to forget the look in Michael's haunting eyes.

She stopped with her knife halfway through a slice of bread with the sudden arrested gesture of a person in a dream. She felt rigid and cold as with the chill of an unearthly atmosphere, when the door opened silently behind her with a swift inward swing. With a great triumph of self-command, she finished cutting the slice and laid the knife and loaf very carefully on the dresser before she turned around. Through a sudden rift in the scudding clouds the moonlight shone on the white forehead and dark, matted hair of the figure in the door.

"Michael!" The name came from her dry throat in a gasping whisper. Then as he remained motionless in the doorway, and the silence of the room was intensified by the spurting sighs of the turf-fire, she forced herself to ask: "Why—why have you come back? Have you given up the voyage?"

At the last word, he drew his hand wearily across his forehead, and echoed her, uncomprehending.

"I came back for something I'll be needing beyond," he said hoarsely. "They tell me it's a rare long way, and a man must be ready for travel."

"Michael, what do you mean? Is it the fishing trip to the north you're thinking of?"

"Aye," he answered absently. "'Tis a

trip to the north—to the far north, with only the sea-hags of the likeness of foul birds to keen a man, and he a long time in the sea."

"It's hard and cruel of you to speak of keening and such like things, Michael, to me, your plighted lover, who is always alone in the night and frightened at shadows."

"Be frightened no longer, Maire," he laughted soundlessly, "for the sound of keening will soon be but as the wind in your ears, and loneliness in the night will be chased away forever, in the company of shadows as faithful and constant as your own."

Maire turned from him, crouching down at the hearth with her face in her hands. The purple stone on its cord swung free from her bodice and sparkled with a sudden gleam from the fire. The hollow eyes of the man shone with an answering glow.

"That's it," he said eagerly, "it's that I must have—the stone of Damachain. The green fires are flickering on the hill."

In a flash she was on her feet, evading insistent hands.

"Now I know what I feared and hoped," she cried fiercely, warding him off. "You're not Michael at all. He would never take back the troth stone of his love. You're a banshee from the barren hills, hoping to redeem your soul with the charm, by taking his likeness and coming to torture me here alone."

Again the soundless laugh lit up the hollow eyes.

"It's the love you speak of would raise all the banshees in the hills of Ireland, with its power powerless to lay one poor wandering ghost."

He stepped away from her. "It's the stone I've come for, Maire. Take it off and place it on my neck with your own two hands."

Slowly she unclasped the chain and advanced toward him. As he bent his head, she shrank back with a cry.

"I can't do it! I can't!" she moaned. "There's a cold air coming from you like the cruel dampness of a new grave, with the wet clay lying along its edges—"

With a deep look into her tortured eyes, he snatched the stone from her by the string, and passed swiftly out of the door.

Left to herself, Maire sank on her knees on the hearth and stared dully before her. Every detail of the low, firelit room clamored to impress itself on her brain—the play of the light on the pewter dishes ranged on the dresser, the knots and blemishes in the splintery wood of the settle, the smooth worn cover on the table, the blade of the knife glittering near the loaf with the single slice off one end.

She closed her eyes tight against the painful reality of her surroundings.

"It must have been a dream," she insisted to herself. Then as her hand sought her neck and the full realization swept over her, she bowed her head.

"O God, make it a dream," she prayed.

DURING the days that followed, those in the village who had envied Maire her easy conquest of Michael found ample opportunity for comment and gossip.

As she passed by the row of scattered, tumbledown cottages that constituted the village of Kilmachain on her way to the headland one windy, gray afternoon, Nan Clancy ran out of her open door and looked after her.

"There goes Maire Conlon," she said eagerly to Kathleen Drogh, her gossip and ally. "Did you see the white, staring face of her? She's looked very queer in the eyes since the day Michael went out with the smacks."

"I did indeed." Kathleen craned her neck to see as far as possible. "Did you notice she doesn't wear the stone any more? I don't blame her, after sending her man out to brave the sea without his good luck around his neck."

"Go on now, doesn't she?" Nan considered the possibility. "You may lay all your hopes of a good kelp harvest on it though, Kathleen, that she's got it somewhere around her, after her triumph of getting it from him—"

"I don't know if she'll be thinking it such a grand thing"—Kathleen nodded her head mysteriously—"if the news I'm

after hearing has any truth in it at all."

"What is it?" Nan questioned her eagerly. "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Sure, I was coming in this minute to tell you if you didn't know it already." She lowered her voice impressively. "I just saw Shawn Colum down at the shore, and he just now come in from Connemara, and he says he passed the fishing fleet on the sea a few days agone. He knew it for ours, for the men up and waved to him, as if they had some news, so Shawn got within hailing distance, and they asked him if Michael's boat had been seen at all—"

"Why," Nan broke in, "Michael started off with them—"

"Yes," Kathleen went on, "so Shawn told them, and they said they knew that well enough, but the morning after the first night they had been out, when they wanted to compare their hauls with Michael's, neither he nor his boat was there at all, and no sign of his red sail on the sky!"

"Saints above," cried Nan, "do they mean that his boat was lost, and he in it?"

"They don't know whether his boat sank, drowning him, or whether he sailed away and left them."

"It wouldn't be like Michael to leave them without warning—"

"Well," Kathleen shrugged, "that's all I know, or they either, and we won't know any more till he comes back in his boat, maybe, or till he is washed up on shore, not looking like the man he was at all."

Nan's face whitened under its tan. "Belike it won't be this shore at all he'll be washed up on; they say, that know the sea, a drowned man always floats to the north." She shuddered.

Kathleen nodded understandingly. "He was a grand man, was Michael. It's a horror to think of him ruined by the cruel sea water, with the feet and hands dropping off him maybe, and no eyes at all in his head."

"Don't!" Nan covered her eyes. "It's terrible to think of—Michael's were so grand and true, the way he'd look any one in the face, so open and unafraid."

"Come, Nan, this may all be a waste of grief." Kathleen gently pulled away Nan's hands. "For all we can foretell, Michael will come up in his red-sailed boat to the beach like a great king, with all the fish of the sea in his nets."

Up on the hill, Maire was thinking of Michael too, in a bitter agony of regret she had never dreamed she was capable of feeling. Since the terrible ending of the day of Michael's departure, she had gone about like a person in a dream. The tiresome round of daily duties and cares was fulfilled automatically, with all the precision and unthinking correctness of a machine, while far away somewhere, her inner consciousness burned with the question she dared not answer. The subconscious certainty that if she were to get her answer at all, it would come to her from the sea led her to spend all the time she could spare on the hill overlooking the wide gray waters with so much of mystery and pain as yet unyielded from their depths.

To-day, the waves came in on the beach below her with their booming drive and retreat deadened to a monotonous alternation of sound by the distance of the cliff above the sea. The wind from the open spaces blew her hair in long flying strands about her face, and as she tried to fasten them into a knot at her neck, the remembrance of her first day with Michael on the cliffs struck her like a blow, and she cowered beneath it. Tired with her outburst of emotion, she reclined on the grass along the edge of the cliff and idly watched the play of the waters in a small eddying cove just beneath. Something in the limp, yet rigid resistance a shapeless black object offered to the buffeting waves made her strain her eyes in unbelieving horror. Her keen, far-sighted glance confirmed rather than denied her unformed fear, and with a gasping intake of breath, she scrambled down the rocky pathway descending along the side of the cliff.

With an effort that made the veins in her neck and arms stand out like cords, Maire drew the water-soaked body of Michael from the sea. It sprawled on

the rocks beside her in an attitude so hideously grotesque that she wanted to shriek with hysteria. She waited with her eyes averted until most of the water in the tattered clothing had dripped out on the rocks, before she attempted to move it. Even then the effort was so intense that she had to rest on every jutting crag before dragging her burden a few feet further.

She stopped at the first flat place on the way up, and flung herself panting on the grass and rested her aching arms: It was impossible to reach the top so burdened; this small platform of grassy earth would serve her purpose. She lay on her back watching the clouds scudding across the leaden gray face of the sky with all her first vivid horror dulled to a numb, quiescent pain. Then, averting her face from where the sodden body was making a muddy place in the grass, she took the piece of jagged driftwood she had carried up with it, and began to dig with furious haste. She had never dreamed it took so long to dig a grave, such a shallow, insufficient one. At last she had finished; she took off her wide shawl and spread it carefully in the bottom of the shallow oblong. Then she turned Michael over, face upward, and kissed his forehead with her eyes tightly closed. As she crossed the hands on his breast with careful piety, she noticed that one of the bony fists was clenched. In an agony of abhorrence, she forced herself to open the fingers. Pressed into the palm, the purple stone of Damachain gleamed wanly.

This confirmation of her worst fear sent her staggering with her burden to the grave in terrified haste. She swept the earth back into the hole with the driftwood, with her hands, with her feet. With lightning rapidity she filled it in and covered it over with stones in a heap. Then, without one backward glance, she scrambled up the side of the cliff to the summit. In terror as of some unspeakable pursuit, she ran to the edge of the cliff where the water beneath was deepest, and, with her arms raised high above her head, she sprang out into the empty air.

THE MAY NUMBER

THE CAPTIVATION OF WASH HANKS *by Jane Hicks.* Wash is one who follows the line of least resistance. Smoking a pipe is the best thing he does; it is entirely a matter of instinct and a purely mechanical means of expending his tremendous amount of nervous energy.

ROOM TWENTY HAS A TENANT *by Carl Clausen.* A room in an abandoned hotel has certain associations which offset the lack of service.

BILLIE AND THE BOSS

By ELTA MACK

When Billie tastes efficiency raised to the nth power, she longs for a place where the philosophy isn't reduced to wall mottoes and the filing system is horizontal.

BILLIE called him the Boss; but no one knew why, for he bossed neither Billie nor anyone else.

There was really no more logic in her calling him the Boss than in his dubbing her Billie, although he said he did that because she collected the bills.

But Billie understood him and humored him, for she sensed that her happy-go-lucky employer felt flattered at his new title. He had writhed, unresisting, when his employees disrespectfully called him Jim, and even his printer's devil dared speak of him insolently as the "Old Man." He let such appellations pass. All his life he had let things pass. He had let his brother pass a forged check for his savings. He had often let his agents pass off bogus subscriptions to his agricultural paper and pass on with the money. Each night he had vowed he would fire the office boy and each day he had let it pass.

Then Billie came.

"Are you the Boss?"

He employed her as his stenographer and general assistant on the spot. At the first opportunity he put on a necktie and pompadoured his hair to lessen the diameter of the bare spot on his head. That bald spot had been the canvas for many a sketch hastily etched by the office boy during the Boss's frequent morning-after naps. But the automatic reign of the office boy was drawing to a close. No more would he pi the mailing list; no more would he drop apples in the metal pot "for the Old Man's lunch." After Billie had spoken that magic word "Boss" a few more times, her employer had developed courage enough to tell his devil to hurry after copy or go where devils are supposed to go. He had also informed the linotyper that the clock was back to sun time. Billie, herself, recognizing her employer's weakness, apparently deferred to him in everything and then used her own judgment.

So the Boss was good to Billie and Billie was good to the Boss. He gave her the run of the office, and she ran it well. He never knew how many times when some fellow publisher had found him sound asleep in his chair with his feet high on the desk and his snores rising still higher, Billie explained that the editor had been up all night writing copy. She had even slipped some scribbled sheets into his hands to verify her "asleep-at-his-post" theory. As a matter of fact, the Boss's copy usually came by the scissors route or else Billie remodelled a write-up to suit her taste—and copyright requirements; but the Boss's nights off had to be accounted for, though he could seldom account for his lack of cash next day. Shrewd Billie soon learned to reply that her employer was out when a certain feminine voice asked for him over the telephone, and in answer to his questioning eyebrow she would explain that some paper company was trying to collect a bill and surely he would not want to talk to an irate collector.

Billie was acquiring the newspaper tongue. She used to examine it in the mirror to see if it had any fibbing spots; but when she saw the Boss fighting in the toils of a hangover headache, she almost felt that it was lawful to do evil to accomplish good.

The first of each month was a nightmare to Billie. She trudged around, rain or shine, presenting bills as old as Me-

thuselah; and advertisers who had hitherto bluffed the easy-going editor with hard luck stories, scarcely knew how to evade Billie's firm avowal that the firm had a signed contract and that the bill must be paid immediately. Or sometimes she smiled—her collection grin, she termed it—and promised a write-up on prompt paymen; and to some she went month after month with bills that she felt were worthless, in the hopes that luck would favor her, as it sometimes did. Then, though her own salary was often weeks in arrears, she turned her collections uncomplainingly over to the Boss and did not remonstrate when he paid it all to the linotyper; for the linotyper was backed by the union and could close up shop for his salary.

She did this, she knew, partly because the Boss gave her the chocolates he took in lieu of treats offered him; partly because when he figured up his accounts Saturday nights, he seldom had more than twenty cents left for his Sunday meals; partly because he always included her in the firm and said, "We've got to make a success of this paper;" partly because he never showed annoyance when she rested from her work; mostly because she had often come quietly back after a forgotten umbrella and found the Boss with his head down on his arms, discouragement personified, a victim to his own good nature, a martyr to leniency. And Billie had pitied him and trudged valiantly out the next day after bad debts and boosted the Annual and worked until her head swam, even though her heart sank. There wasn't much glory in it and there wasn't much money in it; but when the Boss looked across the desk at her and said huskily, "Billie, you're the only real friend I ever had," Billie felt there was something in it after all—a coin that repaid her for all her sacrifices.

Then, too, there was the excitement of it all, the "smoke of battle," she called it, though it was a sham battle. The premium pens that wouldn't write, the razors that endangered many a farmer's throat, the beaters that wouldn't beat, all brought their tragedies and their comedies; and many a time she was forced to give away the office sample to some irate farmer who couldn't sign his name with "that pesky premium." One day she even cut a little boy's hair to demonstrate the "latest patent hair-clipping device," and once she slyly bought some patent whipping preparation to prove to an enraged dairyman that the beater really "couldn't be beat for beating." Whenever the telephone was disconnected because of a delinquent bill, she said it was out of order; and smiled to herself when one young amateur electrician, who had called about some advertising, worked vainly all one afternoon to repair the instrument.

"I'll get so crooked that I can't turn a square corner pretty soon," she mused. "It's wicked and I'm going to reform." But just then a collector came in and she put him off with the imaginary tale of a full-page ad and the promise to pay as soon as the first payment was received. Later she took out her pocket mirror and examined her tongue. "It's no use," she decided, "I'm in the game and I'm going to fight and fib until the Boss learns how to boss himself, at least. All's fair in love and publishing, and it's usually fairer in publishing." Then she continued typing the circulation statement, carefully omitting the number of issues that given circulation included.

So time wore on and Billie began to notice some improvement in the business, just a start towards success. Most of all she began to notice an improvement in the Boss. His headaches became less frequent, and the devil's remarks less flippant; but it seemed such a slow gain that she felt discouraged. Even the Boss's grateful praise at the increased mailing list failed to brighten her, or the increasing reliability of the agents.

"No, Boss," she finally announced, "I've got to quit. I need the money and I have a chance to work for a much better salary in a real estate office, a lovely office too, by the way," and she winced as she glanced about her and mentally contrasted the uptown suite with its carpets and book cases and rolltop desks and all imaginable conveniences, with this squalid, dusty, newspaper-stacked, skylighted cubby-hole.

The Boss was taken back. "Why, Billie, you're not going to leave me, are you? I couldn't run the office without you now. Can't you stay, Billie? If you'll only stay, I'll borrow enough to pay your back salary, and, Billie, you can take an afternoon off, if you want to. Just run things to suit yourself. You are really the boss, you know."

"No, Boss, I've got to quit. It is a bad time, I admit. Maybe in a couple more months you'd be on well-shod feet down here; but it is too good a chance to lose. Think of an office like that, and everything in pineapple pie order. Why, I could even wear white shirtwaists up there and I could keep my hands clean without sand soap. Sorry, Boss, but the sooner I break, the better. You can get along without a stenographer as well now as before."

Saturday night Billie cleared out her corner of the desk drawer that seemed to hold everything from a premium paper knife to a sample of much-needed hand paste. Then she slipped out hurriedly without looking back. She could not face again that hurt look in the Boss's eyes, that discouraged droop in his shoulders. "If I looked back," she said, "I'd promise to stay. He's so kind-hearted, so something, I don't know just what. He may have lots of weaknesses, but, after all, he's the Boss."

Monday morning, Billie, immaculate in a white shirtwaist and freshly pressed blue suit, appeared at the realty office and deferentially awaited instructions

"You're late, Miss Bailey," her new employer remarked tersely. "I must insist on promptness. Henceforth you will report for dictation at nine sharp."

Somehow Billie felt that the explanation of the broken trolley would not receive credence.

"I shall expect you," the metallic voice continued, "to keep your desk in the anteroom in perfect order: 'A place for everything and everything in its place.' There must be no waste of backing sheets and all your notes must be filed chronologically. I shall expect you to address all business callers, but I absolutely forbid any unnecessary conversation. This is not a reception hall. You are also to answer the telephone, but remember it is not for social intercourse. Nothing must interrupt your work. Now I am ready to dictate."

And he did. He dictated for two hours without breathing, Billie thought, and she, who was accustomed to being up and about the little printing shop at will, irked under the strain. He seemed to be testing her ability in speed and word mastery. He repeated himself, then requested that she quote him exactly. There would be no opportunity for her to use her own judgment as to meaning. By the time he had finished, Billie had forgotten she was seated in a leather upholstered chair. She longed for the comfort of the pile of newspapers on the stool at the shop, and even the growl of the Mergenthaler could not make her head throb as did this nervous volley of words.

But she kept at it. "I won't squeal. It is good for me," she said. All afternoon she worked away at the machine, the latest model of a typewriter that someway seemed to her far inferior to the old invisible writer she had left.

Her employer read every word of the manuscripts and each letter had to be headed just so and ended just so; no variations, just a dull grind, a monotony. He searched eagerly for flaws and made notations to recopy where she had grammatically substituted "shall" for "will," and he coldly remarked that henceforth he would make his own choice of words. Billie almost believed he had the letters written down beforehand and was testing her accuracy in every conceivable manner.

"Oh, I'm just a clock," moaned Billie, that night. "I'm wound up every morning to run all day. I'm afraid some day the alarm will go off when it shouldn't. But she kept at it day after day, reviewing notes at lunch hours to gain time, and handing in a pile of neat manuscripts each night. Her employer could not justly complain. Neither did he praise. "He might even compliment me on my spelling," moaned Billie, with offended pride. "I just know he has never had a stenographer before who could spell 'heterogeneous' without hesitating."

She winced, too, under the distrust of

her position; her cool dismissals from the main office during business discussions or when the safe was to be opened. "He will put my picture in the Rogue's Gallery next," she rebelled.

Now as she lunched in a dainty uptown tea room, she hungered for the old-time sociable lunches shared wiith the Boss or the "devil" at the office desk. She gasped at the thought of such Bohemian spreads in her present position. "I'm homesick! I guess," she mused. "Wonder if the the paper will come out this week; wonder if they remembered to insert that wrench ad. Hope they don't forget to run off that new mailing galley. Hope the Boss can pay that paper bill now," and the tears sprang to her eyes as she thought of how helpless the Boss would be in the face of all his troubles without her to help him evade the responsibility in some way. He had needed her; he had put responsibility on to her shoulders and she had developed under it. He had trusted her and had left her to come and go as she thought best, and she had never violated that trust. She had been privileged to use his telephone for her personal conversations and she had never abused that privilege.

But now! Tick, tock! Tick, tock! The pendulum of monotony swayed back and forth in her brain. "I'm just a clock and I better get back to work before I strike," and that afternoon she listed real estate without daring to mention that she knew one of the homesteads could be easily jumped. She had obtained the information while writing up dry farming for the paper only two weeks before. "What good do brains do, anyway," she complained, "when one can't use one's heart? I should 'Get off the observation car and ride the blind baggage,' as the office boy says."

The days dragged by into a month. She received her check promptly and tried to be pleased at the size of it, but she wasn't. She called it "blood money" and wondered if the Boss, her old boss, had enough cash for his Sunday dinner. She did not call her new employer the "Boss." To herself she termed him His Rigid Highness. "He's the originator of Standard Time. His motto is clockwork. He put the "I" in efficiency. I wonder if he's human anyway. Still he isn't cross exactly. He just isn't uncross," she pondered whimsically. "Wouldn't it sound queer to hear him say 'Hello, Billie?' Wouldn't it choke him to praise my work? Wonder if he ever praised anybody. Wonder—"

Then Billie rested her tired head on the corner of the polished, rolltop desk and looked out into the windows of the next skyscraper and wondered if the Annus would go to press on time and if they needed her at her old office as much as she needed them; wondered if the Boss—

At that inopportune moment, His Rigid Highness opened the door and said icily, "You should hunt through the files for something to do. It gives an air of idleness to the office for you to be sitting there without working."

Then Billie went into his sanctum and had a serious conversation. The clock had struck. The alarm in Billie's brain had gone off.

The next Monday morning a bright-faced stenographer stole quietly up a dark flight of narrow stairs to a little dingy printing shop.

"Hello, Boss!" said Billie.

"Hello, Billie!" replied the Boss.

"Paper gone to press yet?" asked Billie.

"No!" answered the Boss.

"We'll hustle is right through," said Billie, as she turned back her cuffs. There was something in the Boss's attitude, in the tenseness of the muscles in his outstretched, welcoming hand, that prompted her to dive towards the mailing galleys.

"You see," she explained, as she remodelled the map alphabetically in a confused attempt to ignore the joy flaming in the Boss's eyes and the moisture glistening in her own, "The clock ran down, so I thought I'd stop being a clock and be Billie for a while instead, Boss."

Buy Victory Liberty Bonds

THE TRAMP

By J. BERNARD LYNCH

Sunshine Harry has a smile for everyone he meets. He is a nomad of the road who clings to a doubtful civilization by the thin thread of a clean collar and an occasional shine.

SUNSHINE Harry, so called because he purveyed the philosophy of the Golden Rule, blinked grateful acknowledgment of the noonday sun that welcomed him to Tumbletown. On his luxuriant brown thatch perched a battered derby, in perfect accord with nondescript coat, and trousers woefully ragged. In appalling contrast shone a spotless collar of celluloid, as well as substantial shoes, highly polished, glinting proud defiance to dust.

"Tumbletown at last," exulted this representative extraordinary of the nomads of the open road. His wistful gray eyes intelligently appraised the prospects. Then extracting a bethumbed volume from a pocket where extraction was rendered difficult by tatters, he read aloud:

" 'The best we may find in our travels is a generous friend. He is fortunate who finds many.'

"Sustenance for mind and soul," he told himself, "but—Gods of Fortune! The stomach is a-begging! Will I find one friend in Tumbletown? One?"

A farmhouse, hospitable in outline, with chimneys reeking cheerful smoke, invited investigation. Speed, inspired by hope, conquered the intervening space; but three feet from his destination he came to a dismayed pause. In the doorway was a portly woman whose grim face crackled wireless warnings.

Off came Harry's dismal derby, his broad back bent with courtly respect, and his tongue groped for an impressive opening.

"You're the third today," she remarked, beating him to it; and her gesture said, "Clear out. You'll get nothing here."

"Lady," he began, in grieved protest, "those others and I have nothing in common; I offer labor for my food."

She studied his face and figure, probably trying to reconcile a clean shave and polished shoes with the rest of his outfit.

Her answer bespoke caution. "Them two," she said, "lost their appetite when I showed 'em the woodpile. How's yours? Got anything staying about it?"

"Steady and permanent," he replied, "and I love the woodpile for what it brings. Abe Lincoln's philosophy was incited by log cutting and took concrete form sitting in front of the fireplace watching 'em burn. Your woodpile, being no institution of measured and exacting charity, makes appeal. Please point it out. I'm hungry."

She led the way around the ell-part and stopped before a pyramid of sturdy logs.

"That's it," she remarked. "When you fetch in enough for a day's burning you get your victuals. Be careful of the saw and ax. They're kind o' old, and them logs the toughest lot we ever had drawed up."

Harry still had a smile to spare as he distributed his coat and derby on convenient nails and placed the aged saw in position. Through resisting knots and strength depleting green spots he cut his way, whistling to keep his courage up and perchance forget the gnawing pain in his stomach. At the end of an hour crowded with persistence he paused to wipe the perspiration from his face and view with pride his collection of stove wood. Soon he had it arranged behind the big stove in the kitchen.

"Enough?" he asked, sniffing pleasant reward in the tempting odors.

"It'll do," she replied. "Set yourself on the bench, and I'll fetch the victuals."

Five minutes later Tumbletown qualified as a haven of wondrous resources. Harry's delighted eye accounted country sausages, crisp and tender, brown buckwheats shining with real maple syrup, flaky biscuits, fresh apple pie, and a creamy cup of coffee.

"Lady, I thank you," he said, gratefully.

"Guess you earned it," she grumped. "We never give nobody nothing for nothing here," and hurried away.

Harry knifed a piece of buckwheat and munched. His fork was poised to spear a sausage when a firm step on the plank gave advance notice of the return of authority. And then the progress of the sausage was interrupted by a hand which fell heavily on Harry's shoulders.

Lowering the sausage—with reluctance—and lifting the gray eyes, the tramp saw before him a face disfigured by scowls which seemed to be chronic.

"What ye doin'?" demanded a surly voice.

"Feeding the famished inner man. It's—it's a nice day."

"It won't be a fine day," came an answering growl, "for any woman as feeds tramps at my kitchen door!"

And, before Harry's astonished gaze, a pair of hairy arms encircled the dishes and bore them to the kitchen. Moved by fierce and hungry resentment, hobo raced after breakfast, but it and its bearer got inside first and the door was slammed in Harry's face. Without a pause the man on the outside got the knob in his hand, but it turned quicker than he anticipated. Through a crack the gray eye of the tramp looked into the barrels of a shotgun.

"H-hold on!" exclaimed Harry.

The reply was to the point. "Get outen here, or I'll riddle ye."

"Mister, you took my grub. And I'm roaring hungry."

"Well, you can take it out in roaring. Cyrus Townsend doesn't feed tramps."

Harry, listening, heard a step on a creaking board. "If that woman don't speak up," he thought, "she'll sour all Sunshine Harry's sweet memories of womankind. I hope she ain't that mean to her sex."

She wasn't. "Cyrus," she pleaded, "let him have his victuals. He earned 'em splitting wood."

"Don't care if he did," was the reply. "I've said no tramps fed at my door, and I'll stick to it. Soon's you feed one the whole tarnation gang's camping on you. Every one a pesky varmint, liable to set your barn afire smoking in it."

As he heard the grim reasoning, the lines of Harry's face grew sharper, and his eyes saw red. In sudden impulse he moved forward, while his hand reached to the back trouser pocket that even womankind knows is sacred to weapons of defence. Mrs. Cyrus screamed. Cyrus himself grew nervous and held the gun but wobblingly. He desired to be the hero of a massacre, not a pitched battle.

Harry drew forth his book, his well thumbed philosophy book. Into the astonished ears of Cyrus Townsend he dinned the following:

"'That man may last, but never lives,
Who much receives, but nothing gives,
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank.'"

Having heaped these coals of fire on the head of the meanest man in Tumbletown, Harry moved resolutely toward the gate. There, on the bench, the cup of coffee, overlooked by the farmer, still steamed. Harry made one grab and raised the fragrant draught to his lips, but the cup was handleless and huge and hot; it slipped through his fingers, wrecking contents and anticipations. Philosopher though he was, one feels that Harry could have shed big, heart dropping tears over the disappointment, for what's a hungry man but a boy grown big, and how are boys best punished but on scanty food supplies?

Harry had to move on, however, and he did move, to a pasture, where glowed a "Warning" to this effect:

PRIVATE PROPERTY.
TRESPASSERS BEWARE OF THE BULL.
CYRUS TOWNSEND.

"That's Cyrus," muttered Harry. "Sounds just like him. A man who will cheat will lie. There isn't any bull."

Serene in the confidence of worldly wisdom, but trembling with a hunger improved by sawing wood, he approached a herd of cows. Apart from the others, where a fence marked the beginning of the road, one cow stood in lone dignity. With kinship of loneliness Harry drew near, although knowing that some cows were more to be feared than bulls. The cow regarded the tramp with friendly assurance, peace only and meekness shone in her great eyes.

Harry had an inspiration. There was a pail, perhaps lost by berry pickers, gleaming under a bush. Harry held it skyward, plugged the one hole with a twig, and approached the cow.

"Now, Mooley," he said, "your owner cheated me out of a hard earned meal and sent me away hungry. You don't mind subscribing a little milk of cow-man kindness to keep me alive?"

He placed the pail in position and strained gently at the teats. The slim stream, as it struck the tin, made melody divine for the fainting milker. And then the warm stream trickled down his throat, after which the tramp who had so gleefully greeted Tumbletown eagerly followed a road that led elsewhere.

Three miles he followed it, and came to a fork where choice of three routes was offered. Harry's election was a narrow lane leading to a picturesque wooden bridge which spanned a sluggish stream. Realizing that he was weary, and still hungry—milk being for babes rather than strong men capable of conquering woodpiles—Harry sank down to rest. Reflections straying from the philosophical were his, as he looked off where Tumbletown formed an unpleasant perspective.

Then his reverie turned to interest, as he heard a light step on the echoing planks, while a cherry song but slightly preceded a little girl.

"Good afternoon," called Harry, his cheer all back again. "Are you a good fairy?"

She stopped in some alarm. "Good afternoon, sir," she answered trembling, while her big eyes widened in an effort to find out what manner of man this strange man was, who talked of fairies as if they really were, just as all the other men she knew talked of live stock and poultry.

"Please don't be afraid, little miss," he pleaded, as she was for going on. "My name's Sunshine Harry. I like little girls. And I'm specially fond of fairies. In fact, I was just stopping on this old bridge to pray for a good fairy to come, and you came. So I think you must be a good fairy."

"No, no!" she cried, drawing closer, as if reassured by this talk of fairies. "I'm just a little girl. My name's Daisy, I'm six years old, and I live three miles beyond the forks. My papa left me down the road a ways, and he'll wait for me there till I come back. He's gone to mill, my papa has."

"Daisy, are you afraid of tramps?"

"Oh, yes," she confided. "My papa says they're liars, and thieves, and they even carry little girls away."

"I know one tramp who does none of those things," said Harry. "He tries to be honest and kind. Won't you sit down and talk to him?"

She looked long into his face, then, perhaps guided by childish intuition, perhaps satisfied with his gentle smile, she settled herself on a loose log near him. "Why do you want good fairies to come?" she asked.

Harry's eyes twinkled. "Well, Miss Daisy," he began, "when I was little like you, I read in a fairy book that if anyone was real good a fairy would come and grant that good boy or girl three wishes. Now I'm grown up, but I've been always expecting the fairy, and this looked such a likely place I was sure she would be around here.

Daisy took this with beautiful seriousness. "I know what your three wishes would be," she told him, "a palace, an automobile and a bank full of money."

"No, Daisy. I have only two wishes to use up to-day. One is that I have something to eat right now, the other that I have something to eat any time I want it, as long as I live."

"Those are funny wishes," said Daisy, disappointed. "It isn't suppertime, Mister. How can you be hungry?"

"Because I've had only a bite of buckwheat cake and half a pail of milk since yesterday noon."

"Since yesterday noon," repeated the child in wonder at the first hint of a world in which meals did not appear at regular hours. Then, "Oh, goody!" she shouted. "I've got a nice lunch in my basket. Mamma always gives me a lunch to eat while I'm waiting for papa on the way home, but I'm never very hungry."

"Are you going to school?" asked Harry.

"No, sir, singing lesson. What a funny man not to know it's Saturday."

Then she spread a wee napkin and uncovered two sandwiches, a piece of cake and an orange.

"One sandwich has butter, and one jam," she advised him, wisely. "Do you—would you mind if I kept the one with the jam on?"

To carry on the play, Harry considered awhile, and then decided that he really preferred butter! Afterward they shared the cake and fruit, and Daisy was very stern when the man tried to slip her the largest pieces.

Finally she asked, "You're not hungry now?"

"No, Missy. That nice food helped lots. You are a good girl."

"Perhaps I should have given you more—or the jam," she questioned, doubtfully. "Mamma says I must learn not to be selfish."

"Your mamma needn't worry. Her little girl has a big heart."

"Haven't you any little girls, Mister?" she inquired, after they had basked thoughtfully in the sunshine for a time.

"No, Daisy, no real ones. But when I fall asleep of nights, with heart attuned to the wood wind's song and wild flowers' perfume scenting my bed of grass and brambles, I have wonderful—yes, wonderful—dreams. Little girls with pink cheeks, golden brown curls, and bright blue eyes, just like you, climb on my knee and kiss me and ask me to tell them stories just—just like regular little girls. And then I wake up sad and lonesome, because they are only dream girls, and the kisses are dream kisses that never come true. But hope steals back again when I look off where Old Sol is peeking with his golden head above the speckled edge of the morning. Then from my book of philosophy I read:

'If the Lord lets the sun shine, grumpy human, and grants you health, nothing else matters, for at sunrise every soul is born again.'

"When the mists are melted I get up and start looking for a chance to earn my breakfast. But, excuse me, little Daisy, for saying things that you cannot understand."

"But haven't you any really and truly little girls?"

"Not now."

"Haven't you any home?"

"Yes, always, further on, at the end of the rainbow."

"You can't catch the rainbow, can you?"

"Not quite. But you can get awfully near and see it smile after the storm has passed."

Her head rested in her hand as she gazed at him in beautiful silence.

"Tell me, Daisy," he said, trying to bring her back to earth again, for he was almost frightened at the thoughtfulness of the little creature on whose imagination he had played, "has this bridge a name and why is it deserted?"

"They call it Echo Bridge, and that's Muddy River. The bridge is awful old—more than a hundred years—and so it isn't strong for teams any more, or autos. I like to come this way, 'cause it's a short cut to my music teacher's. Oh, I most forgot. If you holler out loud you can hear an echo answer over in the pine wood."

"If I shout, 'How d'ye do?'" Harry observed, "I suppose the echo answers, 'Pretty well, thank you.'"

She laughed a long, ringing laugh, and Harry, listening, heard two echoes that caught and held its music—one only being in the pine wood.

"You're a funny man," said Daisy, "but you're real nice, 'cause your shoes shine and your collar is awful clean. I most wish I didn't have to go to-day to singing lesson. Will you be here when I come back?"

"Maybe. But if I'm gone I'll remember you. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Mister Sunshine Harry," she answered, regretfully.

He stood and watched her out of sight. Then, when the roadside foliage hid her graceful little figure, he trimmed his corncob with vagrant cigar butts and smoked in contented silence. The rolling river droned a seductive melody, and unresisting, Harry drifted off to nodland. For an hour he slept, then to his awakening senses came the shrill tones of a child raised in song.

"It's Daisy," he said to himself. He watched her reach the bridge, and then she saw him and broke into a gleeful run. Down came the skipping feet on a plank eaten with dry rot, and before Harry's eyes the child sank from sight. Two despairing cries she gave, one on feeling the board give way beneath her, another when her body was enfolded in the cold water.

Harry, peering over the side, saw her disappear. With a prayer on his lips, and the square of his jaw set firmer than ever before, he vaulted clear of the frail railing and down to share that trap of mud and water. Then, coming to the surface, he shook off the slime that threatened to obscure his vision, and sent his anguished eyes on a tense search of the sullen stream. Not a ripple disturbed the sluggish flow, over which grim silence settled down, and ghastly visions tugged derisively at any hope.

With a frantic pawing of the greasy current he sent himself here and there under the bridge and on both sides, stopping to raise his head far above the surface for a wider vision, then slipping back exhausted to seek convulsively for some token of the drowning child.

And the waters continued to move unbrokenly with the monotonous chant of victory.

In the hysteria of a strong man from whom love and friendship have been rudely snatched, he let his voice lash sharply against the silence of the shore, the drone of the river.

"Daisy, Daisy! It is I—Sunshine Harry. Answer and I will come."

Her little basket floated by—no comfort in that!—and as he listened he caught above the maddening whine of the river the wood's mocking echo, "Answer, and I will come!"

With frenzied humility he raised his clasped hands upward, while from that inky water arose the plea: "All-seeing Father, I entreat Thee, be Thou my shepherd and guide me now."

He waited while hope slowly died, and then, not three feet away, the waters opened slowly, and the sun cast a white blade of light upon a silent face framed with floating curls.

"Daisy!" He gave one cry, plunged forward, and caught her just as the water reached her again.

Holding her high, with powerful strokes the man achieved the shore. There he laid her on a mossy mound, rubbed her hands, expelled the water from her lungs, and applied all the first aid methods that had resulted from his road experiences.

Barren of reward the leaden moments dragged. Harry's apprehensions took firmer root, as he massaged the purple cheeks and forehead that should have been pink. His efforts continued even when they seemed to have long been useless, and then he fancied he detected a faint flush —or was it an illusion of long gazing on one bit of flesh? Hope and despair battling, he leaned over and placed his ear at her heart. It did beat! And then her blue lips began to quiver.

"Daisy, Daisy," he implored, resuming the rubbing and slapping, "open your eyes and speak to me. Tell me you are better."

The eyelids widened slowly, and then the blue eyes, pathetic in their setting of pinched face and sodden hair, were raised wonderingly to his. Recognition welled from their depths, a weary smile struggled for existence, and the purple lips framed a whisper.

"You're good, Sunshine Harry, to help me out of the water. But I'm so cold and tired. Take me home to Mamma. Please take me home."

With the end of the childish plaint, the heavy eyelids drooped again.

Harry's face expressed his bliss, as a

prayer of thought more potent than words ascended on high. Folding Daisy in his arms he started to race down the road to where he supposed her father would be in waiting. It could not be very far, he thought, and he ran and ran, but no team or passerby was to be seen. Worried, he sprang on a bank and viewed a hopeless perspective of foliage and pastures. Not a house was in sight. The road was grass-grown; it seemed to be but seldom traveled.

"Daisy, Daisy," he cried to the child, "where was it your papa was to meet you?"

Daisy lay in a dead faint, unable to answer. Had he saved her but to have her lost again? Was there no help to be found in this tangle of untilled fields and unfelled woodlands? This was a time for philosophy, but not the book-fed sort. Rather was the man encouraged by the tender cheek against his, the delicate warmth of a fragrant breath on his neck, as he sensed the child's helplessness, and vowed to overcome all obstacles.

Ragged garments, dripping and mud-laden, water weighted shoes, a trembling that resulted from always insufficient food and overtaxed exertion, these were Harry's handicaps, that would have sadly impeded his progress, but for the overwhelming power of the thought that on his arms literally rested a great responsibility. Even as the nightmare of miles was lived through, a long smoldering spark blossomed into flame, a paternal fire burned in Harry's heart, which, if fed on love and sacrifice, would flare to heights undreamed of.

And then a house came into view—a rather cold looking house—and for a time Harry feared he had been decoyed by the ignis fatuus of hope to a deserted place. Ten minutes shaking of the brass knocker at length brought a woman and the exclamation, "Land sakes, what ails the girl? She's soaking wet and caked with mud. What have you been a-doing to her?"

Harry let the injustice go without comment, merely saying, "She fell into Muddy River, and I'm afraid she'll be ill unless she is put to bed and her clothes changed. And perhaps a warm drink would help."

"Reckon I know what to do," she returned, sharply. "Give her here."

"Maybe I can be of assistance," suggested Harry, meekly, as he transferred his burden.

"And maybe you can't," she answered. "Anyhow, being as I don't allow tramps in my house you'll have to stay outside until the young one's better."

The door was bolted energetically, and Harry sank to the stone step. The setting sun gave but scant comfort, and when he sought the solace of a smoke he found only a sodden mass of butts, a water soaked corncob, and disappointment. The other pocket gave up a mudstained volume.

"Mr. Sun," he moved, "you can't lay off yet, there's work here for you to do." His eyes looked regretfully at his shoes, no longer shining, then turned with hopeful patience to the red ball of heat whose service he waited.

An hour of shivering brought no relief. A keener chill lent force to his dreamy assurance that the sun was slowly taking leave of Tumbletown. He rose painfully, reached for the brass knocker, and then let his hand drop.

His eyes growing thoughtful, he listened to soft persuasion in tones of reason: "You have done your part. Move on! Tumbletown has no sympathy for such as you. Tramps with honest human impulses are disbelieved. Your friendly meaning will be discredited, your explanations rejected as unsatisfactory. For your kind there is but one classification. Read your archives of experience and understand. Now choose—ignominy and the dark cell, or freedom and sunshine on the open road. Which?"

Harry's back turned to the wide front door. He looked to the western glow. Varied emotions thrilled, while in him, as in that sky, the colorful and indecisive panorama faded to the solid gray of caution and evening.

"Reason, I think you're right," he decided. "A filthy tramp clinging affectionately to a dainty bit of golden haired humanity, after dark, is liable to be misunderstood."

Gathering his moist belongings he moved off the step and down the road.

"Good-bye, little friend," he called softly, as he paused once to look back. Then, feeling all burdens taken from his shoulders, he jogged carefree into the dusk.

Where the shadows thickened at the middle trail of the wood he stopped. There he could hear the eloquence of the great unknown, in spirit whisperings counseling the troubled who listened. Sinking on a cushion of moss and ferns he lay staring at the lights shifting weirdly through a canopy of spreading foliage. The wind tuned an elfin melody, and the sprays of light grew sharper, the swaying shadows evolved into human shapes, while the soft voices of the wood swelled into murmur of protest.

Staring from under half closed lids Harry saw one form detach itself from the restless mass—a little figure with tangled curls and pleading eyes. The other voices hushed in reverence as it spoke.

"I'm cold and tired," was the sad story told. "Please take me home."

Harry stirred and rubbed his eyes. The figure dissolved in shadow, another moving forward to take the place. On the waves of silence was borne a message: "I speak with the voice of conscience. Faith—childish faith—must be rewarded. If you seek guidance, turn to the pages of your book."

Meekly he reached for the volume and parted its pages. In the last bit of daylight a paragraph glowed with significance—

"The friendship which has no gift of sacrifice is not the ideal. If it fail at the point of sacrifice, it fails at a vital point."

Quickly his bent figure straightened with a new determination.

"I'm going back for Daisy," he told the waiting shadows. He hurried through the wood, and, as he turned into the road, wee lights twinkled far ahead, these farmhouse beacons dotting the darkness with messages of good cheer.

As he went up the path to the wide door with the brass knocker he saw the opening illumined from within, and on the threshold the woman stood, with Daisy in her arms, searching the surrounding darkness.

"I'm here, lady," he called, reassuringly, as he approached. "Is she better?"

Cautiously she waited until recognition was complete, then set her speech at liberty.

"Land sakes alive, where you been idling? Guessed you was like all tramps, ready to sneak away at signs of trouble. No, she ain't better. She's wuss. I've bathed her, and I've washed and ironed her clothes and put 'em on her, and now she's gone and got herself into a raging fever. Jest a-sizzling up with it, twitching and fretful, lips dry and head all hot. Guess likely she's going to be real sick. Well, we ain't got no tellyphone, and the folks is using the team, so you'll have to do your own hustling for a doctor and a place where she can sleep. What child is she, anyhow? You belong anywheres around here? It looks suspicious, a tramp, with a pretty little girl in this shape. I don't believe she's yourn at all. I—"

Harry, too impatient for further listening, snatched Daisy from the woman's arms and sped away.

"That's right," yelled the strident voice. "If you've an ounce of goodness in ye, you'll hurry and get her out o' danger—"

"An ounce of goodness!" repeated Harry, as he hurried along. "Even that seems uncertain. And, though she doesn't know it, the lady's right."

In penitence for his momentary desertion, he drew the child closer, until her fevered cheek burned his neck.

Then, afar off, he caught the gleam of auto headlights, and moved hopefully to the middle of the road, there to wait. The thin shafts of white swiftly spanned the distance and revealed him standing, with one arm raised. The machine came to an abrupt stop, and three men jumped from the tonneau. Before Harry could speak, his breath was shortened by a rough hand tightening his collar, his hold on Daisy was loosed by a blow on his elbows, and his precious burden was then transferred to the third of the trio. This one placed the child in the car, then turned to aid the

others in encircling the tramp. In the gleam of the headlights Harry saw six eyes glaring distrust.

"The little girl is ill, very ill," he tried to whisper, wondering at the display of hostility. "Will you not—drive her home—and see she's cared for?"

"Yes," answered the owner of the hand at his throat, "and we'll see you're cared for, too."

"She fell into Muddy River," Harry went on. "I was taking her home—"

"Likely yarn," interrupted the one who had laid Daisy in the car. "Look, men, her clothes are clean and dry—as dry as the tramp's yarn. If the county don't make an example of him, I will. Sheriff, link him up."

Harry gasped as the hand left his neck only to snap heavy handcuffs on his wrist.

While the child lay unattended on the leather cushion, the three men pushed close to Harry in an anger so great they could hardly find words for its expression. At first he bowed his head, but finally he straightened under the sting of their taunts, and brushing the sheriff aside he faced the others, his drawn face flashing danger signals.

"Go, you fools," he shrieked, "or you'll be sorry. You've wasted over a precious five minutes as it is. That child is fighting a fever, do you understand? A fever!"

Impressed by something above anger in his tones, Daisy's father backed into the car, and anxiously gave the order to start, the second man being at the wheel. Harry watched the machine until the tail light was smaller than a glow worm, repeating to himself, "Good-bye, Daisy, good-bye, little Miss Good Fairy." Then he turned to the waiting third man.

"It's a nice evening, Sheriff."

"Generally is when we meet malicious hobos."

"Are the quarters good, Sheriff?"

"Too good for such as you."

"Then the prospects aren't so black, after all," murmured Harry, as they started toward the grim building that watched over the morals of Tumbletown from a lofty hill.

Two nights and a day in the confining shadows of the county jail failed, utterly, to rob Harry of the sunshine of hope, for his, put to the test, proved a working philosophy. It was with cheer that he greeted the sheriff who came to surrender him to the mercies of the Monday court session. His optimism wavered only when he was made to pass between two rows of morbid Tumbletownians, who stood glaring hostility as the court officer guided him to the prisoner's stand.

To Harry the court opening was indistinct, and he heard but vaguely the charges of kidnapping and vagrancy brought against him. His eyes were searching in anxiety for the one friendly face that would have inspired hope.

"Perhaps she's still ill," he thought. "I wish I knew." Under this burden of uncertainty he sensed in fullness the tense dislike of the court, though his face wore a look of complete indifference as he indulgently listened to the testimony of witnesses anxious to prove him guilty. They were numerous beyond all expectation. Some remembered him as a passerby of suspicious appearance, others traced a resemblance to an old-time chicken thief who had menaced Tumbletown. Of course the men present at the moment of arrest were called, and made a vivid picture of the unspeakable wretch, caked with mud, and obviously trying to carry the child away for ransom, or other evil purpose.

Only from the testimony of Cyrus Townsend did he gather a grain of satisfaction. Flushed and resentful, Cyrus turned his imagination loose.

"He threatened to shoot me." said Mr. Townsend. "He reached into his pocket for a revolver, but thought better of it when he see the calm eye and read the fixed puppose behind my shotgun. Then he hauled out a dirty book and read some fool stuff from it."

For this Harry spared a smile.

The testimony closed without a point having been made by the defence, for wisdom of experience taught Harry the futility of employing his right to question witnesses. He did not speak until the judge asked, "Has the defence any evidence to present?"

"Yes, sir," cried Harry, eagerly. "I have a word to say and a question to ask. Tell me first, Mr. District Attorney, please, is Daisy better?"

There were many frowns at this, which most of those present interpreted as an attempt to curry sympathetic favor; but a physician, who had been among the witnesses, was allowed to answer, "The child is still feverish, but not dangerously ill."

"Your honor, folks have misunderstood," began Harry. "Daisy fell through the rotten boards into Muddy River. At a house near the Three Forks I left her to be warmed and to have her clothes dried. If you will find the woman there she will say I told the truth. It was a house with a brass knocker—"

He paused, as an audible murmur of incredulity reached his ears. It was with difficulty quenched by the court officers. The cynical smile of the prosecutor could not be so easily put out.

"Maybe it does sound a bit lame," Harry mumbled, "but if Daisy were here you would have to believe. As it is—I guess that's all, your honor."

He sank dispiritedly into his chair, while the prosecutor rose with impressive confidence, and sought to batten the testimony into a harmonious whole.

"Your honor," he closed, "there can be but little question as to the moral and social status of the defendant, and none whatever as to the evil of his intent when found with a helpless child unconscious in his arms. It is not without significance that a number of reputable citizens see in the prisoner a striking resemblance to one guilty of theft in this county for a considerable period in the past. The volume of testimony presents a strength of argument for conviction which cannot be neglected unless the safety of the community is to suffer. I feel justified in declaring that this man should be made to pay the maximum penalty for his crimes—vagrancy, which is self-confessed, and kidnapping, now proven to an extent that fully justifies his being held for trial. The property of this county must be protected, and especially those most valuable possessions —our families!"

While the judge deliberated, Harry let his philosophical spirit transport him to the elysium of a happier time and place. The words of the clerk sifted to his comprehension through a legal fog.

"Mr. Sunshine Harry, the court holds you in surety for the sum of $2000 for appearance before the Grand Jury to answer the charge of kidnapping. The court finds you guilty on the charge of vagrancy and imposes sentence of six months to be served in the county jail."

The scene changed rapidly, while yet Sunshine Harry sat in strange calm before the curious eyed court. The district attorney gathered his papers, the judge started to rise, and the spectators stood by their seats. Outside a storm was raging, the court room grew dark, and giant branches of trees in the near-by park were made, by the wind, to knock against the windows as if seeking admission. The large door into the lobby swung slowly open. Silhouetted between the shadowy room and the hall, where flaring gas blazed, was a little figure, shapeless and wordless. While every heart stood for a moment still the object moved timorously to the railed enclosure, where it rested before the judge. Absolutely without movement it stood, a shadow among shadows. A shudder went through the room, and then, even as some questioned if the thing were anything real, or an illusion of the eye of conscience, the dark wrapping slipped to the floor, and from the grotesque mass rose a halo of golden hiar, surrounding a face flushed rose-pink, in which gleamed great blue eyes. Like an angel's robe of immaculate purity a nightgown of virgin white clothed the tiny form, flowing in long folds from pink baby ribbon wherewith a pulsing throat was confined.

As an image formed from pictures of the Holy Word, the beautiful apparition faced the people in silence, seemingly searching their souls for virtues, and noting human frailties with pitying patience.

The judge was first to come back to earth. Resuming his seat, he managed to say, in a voice of reasonable calm, "Well, little lady, what can I do for you?"

For the first time since entering the

room the child seemed conscious of the many eyes that were on her. Her head bowed in embarrassment, and, with her slim fingers, she nervously wove folds in her nightie until it raised to reveal slender pink ankles and wee feet buckled into sandals. An added pink, from confusion, was on her face as she raised it, while her eyes stared helplessly on the waiting crowd.

Suddenly she smiled, and forgot her shame. She had found Sunshine Harry, and encouraged by the eloquence of his silent sympathy she set her chin firmly and proceeded with the task she had come thither to perform.

"Please, sir," she told the judge, whom some instinct told her was the person to address, "I want you to be good to Sunshine Harry and not put him in jail."

"I'm afraid I must," returned the man, trying rather vainly to soften his stern tones. "What is your name?"

"I'm Daisy. I'm the little girl he took out of the water. He's a good tramp, don't you think so?"

The judge shook his head. "He was trying to steal you," he informed the child.

Scorn flashed from her eyes, and animated her answer.

"He wasn't, he wasn't," she screamed. "They've told lies about him because he's got no little girl, 'cause his home is in the rainbow, and he can't find the way, 'cause he's a tramp and ain't got no friend but me.

"When I fell through the horrid old boards on Echo Bridge, and into the water. I was dreadfully afraid. The mud choked me and I couldn't see a thing. I guess I fell asleep, 'cause the next I 'member is Sunshine Harry rubbing my hands. He was all wet, too, and covered with mud.

"I asked him to take me home, and then I got sleepy again.

"It was too far, I guess, for bimeby I was in bed in a strange house and a woman I don't know was watching me. 'Where's Sunshine Harry?' I said. 'Is that the tramp?' she said. 'Well, he's outside, where he's going to stay. I won't let him in, 'cause he's a tramp, but he's waiting to take you when your things is dry.' Then she dressed me, and I went with Harry. I knew he'd be good to me. Most tramps wouldn't be so nice to a little girl, would they?

"This morning I asked Mamma if Sunshine Harry hadn't come to see if I was getting well, and she told me if I meant the bad man who tried to steal me he was going to be tried in the courthouse and Mr. Judge would prob'bly send him to prison.

"Oh, how I cried, and I tried to make her know he wasn't bad, 'cause he helped me out of the water, but she wouldn't listen. She just said there weren't no good tramps, and that if I didn't have a nap the fever would come on again.

"When she had gone downstairs I got up and came out quiet, for I was afraid you wouldn't be good to him. I ran all the way, but I ain't a bit tired. You won't put him in jail, will you? Anyway, you sha'n't! I like him, and—and—if he's locked up in a dark place he can't see the sun, and the make-believe little girls."

She paused, to measure the effect of her pleading, perhaps, certainly to push the misbehaving curls from her troubled brow. In the inscrutable mask of the judge and district attorney she saw only a disheartening indifference. The great silence of the spectators who sat with faces petrified into gravity was as a hopeless barrier to confidence.

"He didn't do no harm to nobody," she resumed, in tones freighted with impending tears. "If you put him in jail I won't like you. I won't speak to none of you again—never!" Then, unrestrained, the big drops welled up and gushed freely over the pink face. At first she tried to check the flow with the lace edged nightie sleeve, but it was in vain, and then she crumpled into the shawl on the floor, a pathetic little figure of sorrow, her sobs pregnant with reproof. And there, in her helplessness, she unconsciously employed the powerful influence of childish sincerety and the only slightly lesser resource, a woman's tears.

Tenderly the court officers lifted Daisy and placed the great shawl about her shoulders. She was then led to the outstretched arms of the spectators. Her sobs kept time in mournful rhythm to her

short, uncertain steps, reaching deep in a pitiful appeal that tightened chords of feeling into humanity's full tone. Under consoling words of friends they diminished by exhaustion, leaving a silence in which the judge's vibrant voice penetrated to the very lobby.

"In the kidnapping case the order holding the defendant for the Grand Jury is vacated and I find the defendant not guilty. In the vagrancy case sentence is suspended and the defendant may be released on his own recognizance."

While a hush of approval held the people, Daisy, to whom the meaning had been explained in a kindly whisper, ran towards the tramp and climbed on his knee. Pressing her cheek to his, she murmured, "Oh, I'm glad, aw'fly glad, Sunshine Harry, 'cause you are my friend." Then her curly head arched coyly as she asked, "Wouldn't you like to kiss a really and truly little girl?"

"Yes, really and truly little girl," he murmured gratefully, as he bent forward to touch her lips.

"This court has been adjourned," announced the court officer at this moment, with simulated severity, as he proceeded to clear the room. Harry went out among the first followed by men and women who lingered to shake his hand as that of a hero. Indeed, their regret for once having misunderstood was expressed in more than words.

"Please accept this small sum of money," pleaded the prosecutor, who had been passing his hat.

"Can't do it," answered Harry, "it's against my creed to carry money."

"But there is a debt—"

"That the child paid when she called me her friend. In my book is an apt line." He drew from his pocket the water stained volume, and read to the amazed gathering—

"'Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send;
He gave to misery (all he had), a tear;
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.'"

On his face was the glow of the greater award as he replaced the book, unconscious that into his tattered pocket the prosecutor had covertly dropped the money.

His battered hat came off, he bent on one knee before his child friend, and reverently touched her hand.

"When you pray to-night, little Daisy," he pled, "thank the Great Master and ask Him to make the going a wee bit smoother for Sunshine Harry."

"I'll remember. Good-bye, Sunshine Harry."

He moved away from the group that stared respect and wonder. His was a strange creed that precluded dollars and dross; his a philosophy they could admire, but did not understand. They watched him reach the open road, saw his shoulders straighten, his step grow confident, and on his face the reflection of a heart overflowing as he moved proudly toward the great horizon.

We should never do wrong when people are looking.
—*Mark Twain*

Maitland's offense would be hardly worthy of comment but for the fact that his wife was looking. And in that unfortunate circumstance lies the reason for Maitland's conviction without the formalities required by the common law. PROPRIETY AND A PULLMAN, the story of his indiscretion, is one that you will read next month.

JOANNA AND MOTHER G.

By M. MACKENDRICK

Joanna is bold enough to defy Mrs. Grundy and sufficiently up-to-date to be deliciously shocked at her own conduct.

ELLO, Mrs. Riley."

The owner of the "Hiker's Rest" raised a flushed face from beneath the counter and twinkled a wide-smiled welcome.

"Well now, Miss Brown! And are you going up the trail?"

Joanna nodded. She slipped off her knapsack and took possession of a stool, her eyes dwelling speculatively on Mrs. Riley's unchanged menu, frankly exposed to view of all whom it might concern.

"Will you be having something, now?" Joanna demurred. "A sandwich maybe?" The suggestion proved ill-advised. Mrs. Riley's sandwiches were of a known substantiality, and the day was hot.

"N-no," said Joanna, "I don't believe I will—" She had eaten little at luncheon but experience had taught her that a seven mile trail is negotiated most successfully on light rations. "Are Mr. and Mrs. Eads much ahead of me?"

Mrs. Riley raised concerned brows. "Well now, have they gone up—and me never seein' them!" Joanna paused in adjusting her knapsack.

"Why, I wonder—"

"Maybe I was looking the other way, just," suggested Mrs. Riley.

Joanna's frown vanished in a mischievous smile. "Mrs. Riley, you know you never look the other way!"

The big Irishwoman grinned broadly and waved her denial with both plump hands. "Sure, not from the likes of *you*, me dear!" she answered, cocking an appreciative eye at the girl's warm young beauty.

Joanna, hesitating in the doorway, smiled a little absently. "I wonder—"

"I was out back a bit, this mornin'. Your friends would be passing then likely."

"Oh, yes—very likely." But she stood a moment longer, frowning over her indecision. Then, with a sudden good-bye smile, she swung off up the street resolutely and turned into the narrow trail which led away at an angle along the hill.

It was early afternoon and the cliff-like canyon wall to the right reflected the sun in a blinding glare. Joanna pulled her soft Panama hat low over her eyes and struck a steady uphill gait. Behind her the valley and the distant city were dimmed in a haze of heat. Ahead rose the hills, and the higher mountains behind, range beyond range, until the bare cap of "Old Baldy," showing mistily through the veil of late spring sunshine, topped them all. Along the lower ridges, the fire line stretched a green, shaven path. The sage was high and green, beside the trail; the trunks of the manzanita bushes glowed wine red through their glossy leaves. Rabbits hopped from cover to cover; little gray lizards flashed across the rocks; once, below on the benches, some quail rose with a sharp whirr of wings, and once a thin yellow snake crossed the trail. It was all sunny and friendly and happily familiar to Joanna as she swung along, humming to herself.

Two boys, half-grown, exuberant, came in sight, running and hallooing as they ran. They slowed up to let Joanna pass and she answered their smiling greeting with the easy freemasonry of the mountains. They stood for a minute looking after her. Joanna's Norfolk coat, fastened around her waist by the sleeves, outlined her slim hips, her little brown boots looked trail-worn and capable, her knapsack hung true from graceful shoulders. She made

a pleasant picture on the sunny trail. But suddenly the older boy's look of unconscious, undefined wistfulness vanished in a flash of animation.

"Beat you to the cut-off!" he challenged, and in five minutes their two figures were moving dots far along the lower trail.

The sun had dropped behind the highest ridge and the canyon was full of shadows as Joanna began the steep descent to the cabin. In the twilight the smell of sage grew stronger. She sniffed the fragrant air with long, joyous breaths and quickened her pace. But the down grade proved dampening to her spirit; she had blistered her heel and felt it now for the first time.

"Oh, hang!" said Joanna, and slowed up to a weary limp. From below the roar of the stream sounded more and more distinctly. The twilight deepened. Joanna felt a strong revival of the premonition of the early afternoon. Suppose the Eads had not gotten her message? Or had not understood it? But then they said they would be coming up anyhow, whether she came or not. Still it was odd that Tom had not stopped for his usual cup of coffee at Mrs. Riley's.

The grateful coolness of the dusky canyon, the inspiring majesty of the towering hills, had changed subtly into cold depths and menacing heights. Joanna shivered. She was suddenly hungry and her heel hurt abominably.

At the first crossing of the stream she stopped to put on her coat. It was always cool in the canyon after sundown, but tonight an unusual chill seemed to creep out from the shadows. The deep green pools in the stream, ordinarily so inviting, looked forbiddingly cold. Joanna limped forward in uneasy haste. But after rounding the last curve in the trail she gave a sigh of relief. There was smoke coming out of the cabin chimney. She could see it through the trees.

She made the last crossing with renewed energy, leaping with automatic care from stone to stone, and with her mind on hot coffee.

At the last little lift in the trail, where it broke through the brush into the cabin clearing, Joanna stopped as though an unseen gate had slammed suddenly in her face. There was some one in the cabin, true enough; the glow of the fire on the stone hearth at the end of the one long room shone invitingly out the open door, and a man, with both arms full of wood, passed through the revealing fan of light.

Joanna stood very still. He had not seen her and she turned half around to go back. But she was tired and uncomfortable and horribly hungry, and, after all, why not? She limped slowly to the door and stopped. At the sound of her step the man dropped his wood and turned.

He stood motionless and looked at her and the expression in his eyes was hard to read. A dull red burned slowly up beneath his tan. Joanna nodded, a casual, conventional nod, and came forward. He took a long breath.

"Joanna—by all that's holy! And you're hurt—" he reached her in one long stride and put out a steadying hand. Joanna sank on the bench by the fire and lifted an unconcerned face to his eager, searching eyes.

"Where are Tom and Edith?" she asked.

"Tom and Edith Eads? I don't know"—he rested both hands on his hips and looked down at her, frowning—"and I don't care—if that's all you can say to me, after two years!"

Joanna put out a conciliatory hand. "Sorry, Jimmy, but I am too tired and hungry to be polite—"

"Polite the devil! I didn't say I wanted you to be polite—" He sat down beside her on the narrow bench. "Joanna—"

"Ouch!" Joanna interrupted, and stopped to feel gingerly of her injured heel. Arden straightened slowly, but the sight of the real suffering on her face, brought him to his knees in sudden concern.

"Your foot—what's the matter? Let me take off your boot—"

"I've blistered my heel and it hurts awfully!" She lifted her eyes to his with involuntary coquetry, but dropped them again hastily and rose. "No, you can't do anything. It's all right. And if Tom and Edith aren't here I'll have to go right back, of course."

"Of course your grandmother! You

don't walk seven miles with a blistered heel—not if I know it. Here, sit down and fix it up. I've got some peroxide and gauze. The Eads will show up later, probably. What—"

But Joanna shook her head mournfully. "No they won't. I know now they didn't get my message. I had a hunch something dreadful was going to happen when Mrs. Riley hadn't seen them. Oh, bother—!" She sank back on the bench and stared dejectedly at the fire. Jimmy carefully adjusted a log that was smoking and then turned and looked down at her, frowning.

"You mean they didn't know you were coming?" he asked.

"No—yes—that is, you see I said I couldn't come, and then I could, so I sent word—but they told me they were coming up anyhow. Of course I ought to have seen them myself, but I thought surely they'd be here; they almost always come." Joanna was feeling more deeply aggrieved every minute. The odor of hot, fragrant coffee was subtly undermining her reasoning faculties.

Jimmy was rummaging in one of the wall cupboards. Joanna wrenched her tired eyes from the fire and her thoughts from the coffee and began to unlace her boot.

"I'll dress this wretched blister and then I shall manage going back all right." She tugged at the fastening and pulled off the boot with a grimace of pain.

"If any one does any going back, it will be I, of course. Don't be silly." Arden spoke without turning, his head half hidden in the cupboard.

"Why Jimmy Arden! I wouldn't stay here alone for anything on earth. I'd be scared to death!"

Arden handed her the roll of gauze and the bottle. His eyes were smiling. "What is there to be afraid of, you crazy child?"

Joanna regarded him with reproach. "Oh, of course *you* don't mind a little thing like a mountain lion—Nimrod." she interpolated scornfully, "but I do, and Tom saw one the last time he was here. And there is a fox, and all sorts of things."

Jimmy threw back his head and laughed. "The fierce rabbit, the fee-rocious squirrel!" he chuckled.

"Don't you laugh. *Don't!*" She stamped her foot furiously—the wrong foot.

Arden grew contrite. "Sorry, dear—I'm a beast!"

"Don't call me 'dear'!" There were tears of pain and rage in Joanna's dark eyes.

"Darling, I won't—only don't cry—"

"I'm not crying. I'm hungry!"

"You poor kid!" He got her a pan of cold water and handed her a towel. "Here, sit down and fix up the heel while I get supper. It won't take ten minutes."

Joanna had turned her back and was busy rummaging in her knapsack.

"I can't stay to supper here—alone, with you," she said.

"Rot! You can't do a downhill hike with a blistered heel and an empty 'tum.' It isn't done, you know." Joanna did not answer. Jimmy waved an admonitory spoon at her and spoke with emphasis. "That's Mother Grundy stuff and doesn't go here. Forget it!" He turned to the table where his own knapsack, half unpacked, leaned against the tin flour box. "There seems to be plenty of grub here. Mine is about gone. Let's see—flour (wait till you taste my flapjacks!), potatoes and onions (we'll fry 'em), and bacon." Jimmy's hands moved among the provisions with practised speed.

"Bacon?" Joanna's voice came faintly. She was looking over her shoulder, eyeing the fire wistfully.

"Bacon." Arden repeated the magic word firmly. "Do you like yours brown or medium?"

Joanna straightened with abrupt decision and twisted around to face him. "Brown," she said, "and about ten slices!"

Jimmy grinned. "Brown it is, and all you want," he assented, slicing potatoes with the precision of experience.

Joanna stirred uneasily, hesitated and then—"Jimmy, couldn't you—that is—" He looked up and at sight of the towel in her hand, nodded understandingly.

"Ah, privacy—the lady would like a little privacy. Half a second till I get these spuds on the fire and I'll go rustle water and some more wood, while you fix up." And presently she was alone in the cabin

with the appetizing smell of frying onions to lend speed to her brief toilette.

Twenty minutes later, with cool bandages on her sore heel, fresh hose and some old moccasins of Edith Eads' on her tired feet, Joanna gave her hair a last little pat, powdered her nose, and sat down to supper, a changed woman.

"Where ever did you learn to cook like this?" she asked, after a swallow of the fragrant coffee and a taste of the potatoes.

"Well, you know I always have roughed it a bit, and then these last two years—"

"Oh, yes," Joanna interrupted smoothly, "you went to Africa, didn't you? Was it wonderful?"

"Hellish!"

"O-oo, how unfortunate!" Joanna looked wickedly sympathetic. "And now, what might you be doing up here?" Arden helped himself to more potatoes and Joanna to coffee. She thanked him with a demure smile but would not meet his eyes.

"Oh, I got restless, after I'd been here a few weeks and hiked for the hills—in back." He nodded upstream. "Tom told me where he kept the key to this shack in case I wanted to stop in on my way home." He regarded her over the rim of his cup. "How about you? You never used to go in for this sort of thing—considered it unladylike, I believe—along with other things."

Joanna kept her eyes lowered and calmly passed her plate for more bacon. "Oh, one learns."

"Yes," agreed Arden drily, "one does." He drew the "makings" from his pocket and began to roll a cigarette.

Joanna watched him, her chin in her cupped palms.

"Make me one, too." she said. Jimmy stopped with the string of the tobacco sack half drawn in his teeth, and stared.

"You smoking!" For an instant he was too dumfounded to move. But Joanna held out her hand smiling, and hastily finishing the cigarette, he presented it to her with a delighted grin.

"I like it—out like this," she volunteered and leaned forward to reach the match he held for her.

"Holy smoke, but you have changed!"

"Naturally," Joanna retorted crisply, "I'm not a mummy!"

Arden watched her, with appreciative eyes, during a long inhalation.

"And this is the young person who wouldn't promise to marry me because she didn't approve of being kissed, and who reasoned, with gratifying intelligence, that she would have more or less of that—er indelicate proceeding to put up with, if she did! Joanna, what has made you so—so human?"

Joanna had blushed at the first part of this speech and now she kept her eyes resolutely turned to the fire. She pinched out her cigarette on the edge of her plate and gave him a sudden smile out of the corner of her eyes.

"Well, *you* began it." She laughed in his astonished face and went on, choosing her words slowly. "You taught me that I was a woman after all—and not, well—not unattractive. I didn't appreciate the value of the lesson *then*. I was an awful little prig, wasn't I? But afterwards I began to wake up. Other people—"

"Huh! other *men*, you mean!" Arden leaned forward, knocking over his cup in his sudden vehemence. "Who—who was the man who woke you up?"

Joanna moved back precipitately. "Don't be silly, Jimmy. Every one wakes up to things—and people, sooner or later. Good gracious! will you look at the time!" She stared at her wrist and the small silver watch that had been uncovered by her hurried movement. "It's after eight o-'clock, and I've missed the last car. Oh, what shall I do?" She rose in obvious panic. "Stupid idiot! I ought to have watched the time. Perhaps I can make it yet."

"Not a chance," said Arden. "You couldn't make it if you ran all the way."

Joanna was packing in mad haste. "I'm going to try just the same." She reached for her boots. "And anyhow I can stay in—" She stopped in consternation. "Oh, there *is* no place to stay. That wretched little hole! But I could get a machine—"

"Where?" Arden, leaning, with hands in pockets against the side of the fireplace, surveyed her with raised brows. "There

is no public garage, and you can't very well wake up some perfectly strange party in the middle of the night—not in *that* little burg. They'd have you arrested. Besides" —he took out a pipe and knocked it carefully on the hearth—"you are in no state to do that long walk back, and you know it. If you say so I'll go—but that's all nonsense. Why can't we both stay here and be comfortable?"

"Don't be ridiculous!" Joanna limped agitatedly back and forth, the worn old moccasins, which were far too big for her, flapping at her heels. There were shadows under her eyes and she had lost the gipsy color in her cheeks.

"I'm not ridiculous, but you are. Why you are so tired now you can hardly stand and, if you have any sense left at all, you will realize how you'd feel after that hard trail—in the dark—always providing you could get there, in the first place.".

He put down his pipe, and coming over to the table, began in the most matter of fact way to scrape up the dishes. "There is nothing to do but stay right here—and it's all right anyhow." With a pile of cups and plates in his hands he stood looking down at her, where she had halted to gaze in distracted puzzlement into the fire. "You know that, don't you?" he added and forced her to meet his eyes. Joanna answered with a straightforward, if somewhat wan, little smile, and sank down on the bench, as though suddenly overcome with her own impotence. Presently she raised her eyes.

"You might find some one at that store, four miles upstream," she suggested timidly, "if you are not too tired."

Arden brushed the last crumbs off the table into the fire with a sweep of his arm, covered up the pan of dishes with a towel, and drew up another bench. "No use," he said, "I came by there this afternoon. There's no one there and a sign on the door said the place would be closed two days. This is the middle of the week, you know."

Joanna, after a restless trip to the door, come back to her seat. Arden put out his hand and covered hers with a brief, reassuring grip.

"Just you forget old Mother G. and make the best of it, there's a good fellow!"

"I suppose," said Joanna, "I suppose I'll have to. Oh, but there *must* be some way!" She stood up again nervously. "Of course you could go back and I could stay here." She looked stealthily over her shoulder at the black square of the door.

Arden caught the look. He smiled and leaned forward to light his pipe with a twig from the fire. "Yes, we could do that." He pulled some pillows from the couch behind him and arranged them on the floor with one propped against the bench, facing the fire. "We could—but don't let's." He patted the pile of cushions. But Joanna did not sit down. She stood staring fixedly into the coals. The rushing song of the stream, the warmth of the fire, her own delicious weariness, hypnotized her. She felt as though she never wanted to move, not even to sink into the comfortable seat waiting there on the floor. Arden's matter of fact tones brought her dreaming eyes reluctantly back to his face.

"After all, what's the difference?" he was saying. "You are caught in the mountains with a game heel and I happen to be here to help you—nothing to that. Conventions are silly shackles at best—"

"Yes, I know they are," Joanna sat down at last, her eyes still on the ever changing coals. "I've thought so for a good while." She turned to Arden with a little uncertain smile. "But it's not so easy to live up to a conviction like that. Custom—"

"Custom," he began, "there you have it. It's all nothing but custom, precedent, tommy-rot!" He pocketed his pipe and leaned back with crossed arms. "Now in Africa, for instance—parts of Africa—they don't wear clothes, none at all; and we are shocked, most of us, and send the poor souls meddling missionaries. Yet look at our modern dancing—good Lord!" Joanna agreed with a shrug of distaste. "Then, in Constantinople they worship dogs; here we cut 'em up alive. Also the Turk likes his lady love of the size and general consistency of a well stuffed feather bed—and here fashion demands—"

And so they talked an hour away, and then another. Joanna, nestled comfortably in her cushions listened while, opposite her, Arden, stretched full length and lifted on his elbow to face the fire, smoked pipe after pipe and talked. He told her of far places; of strange peoples with strange ways; of how the lure of pure geography, the charm of mere names on a map, could draw one across the world, giving disappointment sometimes, but oftener a realization beyond one's dreams.

It was eleven o'clock before he caught Joanna in her first yawn and firmly decreed bed.

"But I'm not bored, Jimmy," she protested, "you know it. I could listen to you all night—"

But Arden rose and held out a hand to help her up. "I'm glad my travels please you, since you were the cause of them." He spoke with the first touch of bitterness since their meeting. Joanna made a rueful little *moue* and got to her feet unaided.

"Now you've gone and spoiled it." She groped sleepily for her moccasins which had slipped off long since and apparently gone for a voyage of exploration on their own, beneath the table. Arden captured them and carefully held one at a time while she stepped once more into their somewhat theoretical confines.

"Sorry. I won't grouch again." He got up. "Where will you bunk, by the way, inside or out?" he asked, hesitating above the pile of blankets on the couch.

"Oh, out—that's the best part of this sort of thing. I usually have the swinging seat. It's too short for any one else. Under the sycamore—there." Joanna came to where Arden stood in the door with his arms full of bedding, and obligingly pointed.

"I see." He went out. "Do you like lots of covers?" he called from the darkness.

"No, just two pairs of those light blankets and a tarp—yes, that's fine." She had come out also and now stood shivering beside him while Arden spread the bed clothes with businesslike flapping and smoothing.

"Br-r! It's cold away from the fire! Where will you sleep, Jimmy? The best level bit is over there by the stream."

"Yes, that will do as well as any place. Want a candle beside you?"

"Yes, please." Joanna turned and went back into the cabin. "I'll be out of here in a jiffy," she called and shut the door. And presently a dark head with a braid dangling behind one ear peered cautiously out.

"Jimmy, where are you?"

His amused voice answered out of the shadows. "Over here by the stream, lost in contemplation of the stars—and with my back turned!"

There was a subdued giggle, a shuffling of hurrying feet, and a small figure scurried to the shelter of the waiting bed. The bath robe which inveloped her was plainly one of Tom Ead's, since it had to be held up all around, thus revealing to any chance observer an alluring display of pink pajama trousers and white ankles. But Jimmy was a gentleman and kept his word. He did not turn around.

Joanna heard him pull back the benches from the hearth and put out the fire. When the last flame had flickered and died, the darkness seemed to thicken visibly around her, and Jimmy's voice, coming from the clearing, sounded far away and strange.

"Are you all right, Joanna? Sing out if you want anything."

"I will, but I sha'n't want anything. I'll probably lie awake for hours." Already her voice sounded drowsy. "I always do the first night in camp. N-night—"

As their voices ceased, the natural sounds of the night filled the canyon; the stream roared among the rocks, crickets shrilled their rasping song, and, now and then, came the sound of some small animal moving in the brush.

But it was not Joanna who lay for hours, staring with aching, sleepless eyes into the night. Joanna slept deeply and at once, like a tired child.

It must have been three o'clock—for the moon, leering drunkenly in its last quarter, had just climbed the eastern ridge and sent a pale shaft of light into the clearing—when Joanna woke with a cry.

Arden was beside her before the echo of her voice had died.

"Oh, Jimmy!" She clutched him wildly. "Something—something jumped on my bed!"

"Nonsense, dear, you were dreaming." He patted her back reassuringly.

"I wasn't. It was big as—as a dog! And it ran across the moonlight there!" She pointed excitedly over his shoulder.

Jimmy went on patting. "I know, I heard it." He turned his head to measure the distance between the couch and the box-cooler which hung from the same limb of the big sycamore tree. "But it was just a fox, I think, having a try for the bacon, there in the cooler. He probably missed his aim and joggled your bed. Don't tremble so, darling!"

Joanna held tightly to his arm with both hands, "I thought at first I was a-alone!" she said shakily.

Arden did not answer. His thoughts had stampeded and he knew only the feeling of the slim, soft body in the hollow of his arm, the clutch of the small, frightened hands on his sleeve.

Gradually Joanna's gasping breaths grew fainter. Her fingers relaxed their hold and she tried to straighten up. "I'm all right now," she said, but Arden's circling arms only tightened around her.

"Joanna—" His throat was dry and his voice came with difficulty. "Joanna, I'm going to kiss you. Don't move!" He captured the two small, beating, pushing fists in one hand and held them firmly down against her side. "Don't move, I said! You can't get away—"

"No!" cried Joanna, struggling angrily. "No!" in breathless desperation. But Arden slipped up his other arm until her head lay in the crook of his elbow, and stooped.

He kissed her mouth, softly, once—twice—then caught his breath and waited. Joanna lay suddenly very still. Again he bent his head, and this time, with his lips on hers, he felt the touch of soft, fluttering fingers against his cheek.

"Sweetheart—little sweetheart!"

"Jimmy," whispered a small, puzzled voice, and, after a pause, "Jimmy, will you p-please go away now—"

"Yes," he said, as though in answer to his own thoughts, "Yes." Methodically he tucked in the tumbled covers.

"Good night—"

"Good night," he answered, and stumbled blindly across the moonlit clearing.

THAT ROGUE, FLEURELLE by the author of IN THE NEXT ROOM will appear in the May number. It is about a gay cavalier who, while traveling in the East as a commercial attache of the French legation, enjoys the hospitality of a Chinese mandarin. Upon his departure he has the unusual honor of choosing his own farewell memento. His choice, which is without precedent except in the Arabian Nights, startles the Chinese household out of its centuries of Oriental complacency.

IN THE NEXT ROOM

By CARROLL K. MICHENER

Stanley thinks he has rejected the very real and satisfying apples and oranges of a material world to nibble at the fruit of abstraction; but he forgets that a girl is not an abstract idea and cannot be treated as such.

THE last of young Stanley's acquaintances to grapple with him before he actually faded away into his hermitage was Allington.

"What's the matter with you—woman in the case?" was Allington's brutal demand of him.

Stanley shook his head, mournfully reproachful. That question had come to his ears before.

"It's not that red-headed widow, eh—the one that ran around with you the last year down at Tech?" persisted Allington.

"No," groaned Stanley, "and it isn't the woman last summer at the beach. Neither is it the girl at the Alhambra—the roly-poly one, you remember—nor the sweet young person mammy is exhibiting this summer to the eligible young men in our set. (Beastly term, that!) It isn't a woman."

Allington led him to a table in the club dining room for what he described as poor Stanley's last square meal. He pursued his cross-examination.

"If it isn't a woman, then what the devil is it? Are you a little dizzy up here?" (Tapping his forehead). "That's rough, but remember it's from an old college chum. It's been whispered about that poor Stanley is a bit—not all right, these days, you know. That's why I mention it."

Stanley nibbled sadly at the celery. He ignored his friend's amiable insinuations.

"What's your idea, Allington," he asked discursively, "of the purpose of life?"

Allington's soup spoon clattered to the table. He elevated his hands and shoulders in a violent shrug.

"So that's it!" he roared. "I might have known. That's what comes of all this delving into the occult. You even wrote your doctor's thesis on that, didn't you—something about Indian philosophy?"

Stanley's sadness of aspect increased a shade or two at this new onslaught.

"Sticking to my question," he persisted, "what's your idea of the purpose of life? To sell as many bonds as possible, sport a new car every season, and raise a family of heirs to the same follies?"

"Oh, damn it!"

"Life looks different to me. There are fewer dollar signs in it, and more mental currency. I'm sick of house parties, motor cars, women prattling about things to wear, men arguing about what make of tires lasts longest. I want to get away from it. I want to work on my book. I couldn't do anything at home. Something always is breaking in on me. I've got to get away from the harness of material things."

"Going to stop eating? That's one intolerable nuisance. Your appetite seems good, though. Have some more fish?"

"Of course you don't understand. I didn't expect you to. It's just my idea of getting the most out of life. I suppose we're all looking for happiness. You find it in your bank account and your motor cars. I'm looking for mine in the abstract instead of the concrete."

"I don't know much about philosophy," interposed Allington, "but I do know this: abstract ideas won't feed your offspring or buy a new bonnet for your wife—supposing you were sensible enough to have a wife."

"That's just it! You're getting my idea. I want to break away from all this wife business. I'm escaping from the material world so far as possible without giving up the ghost."

"I suppose you define life as the pursuit of happiness; and the happiness you pursue is the abstract variety. Is that the idea?"

"Something like that. I won't go into details. You wouldn't get my point of view at all."

"But is there any such thing as abstract happiness? Remember what old Jenkins, the philosophy 'prof,' had to say about that? He had a favorite illustration. Fruit, he used to say, is an abstract idea. Fruit doesn't exist. There are only oranges, apples, pears. Do you follow that?"

Stanley engrossed himself with the dessert. What was the use in arguing? Allington proceeded with his discourse to a triumphant conclusion.

"And so," he argued, "you're going to nibble at the fruit of abstraction, instead of the very real and satisfying apples and oranges of the material world. Oh, you'll be back to it soon enough. You won't find happiness in the Yogi philosophies, or in metaphysical ideas, or somewhere up in the clouds—not until you're ready for your wings and your little harp. And take my word for it, if you find happiness at all, it's most likely to be in the next room mending your shirt."

STANLEY'S idea of a hermitage was somewhat feeble. Perhaps that was why he chose a suburban flat building. There was at least some reason in the choice, however. If he went to a sleepy village his business would be everybody's. If he remained in town his friends would intrude upon him. The only place to be really alone probably was the place he chose, where he could immerse himself in a multitude of strangers.

Shut up in his rooms, sprawled in a big chair which was the center of a dizzy mess of books and scribblings, he spent two weeks of comparative asceticism. He had hurled a book agent down stairs, repulsed the janitor on divers missions, friendly or inimical, and after the lady on the floor above had used his telephone twice he had had it disconnected. He spurned the amicable greetings of the policeman whom he encountered on his daily airings in the park, and he was guilty even of unmannerly conduct to a pretty nurse whose upset baby and perambulator he restored on one occasion to equilibrium—his offense being in striding away from her without either verbal or visual response to her expression of gratitude. In fact he omitted nothing in his struggle to live up to the traditions of a hermit as he understood them. And he wrote quantities of stuff for his book.

But the material world managed to break in upon him in new and unsuspected ways. There was no end to this subtle cunning of casual events. For instance, he was sitting very late one night in the midst of his accumulating carelessness of books and papers when a timid rap at the door roused him angrily from a lofty reflection on the probable social forces animating inhabitants of the planet Uranus.

He maintained silence, and lowered sternly in the direction of the door. Even when the timid rapping was repeated he made no move, except to contemplate, possibly—a purely mental gymnastic as yet—what bit of furniture he should hurl at the intruder.

But then came the sound of a quavering voice, and that altered everything.

"Oh, be quick!" came to his ears from the other side of the door—the troubled words of an agitated woman.

Stanley pawed among the papers for the slipper that had escaped from one of his feet as he dangled them aloft in masculine abandon, and then shuffled irritably to the door. He opened it on a girl of about twenty, with a very frightened face and trembling lips. She wore a kimona, and her hair was down. It fell in an ample cascade over her shoulders.

"Please—you were the only one in the building that seemed to be up. Papa is dreadfully sick. Won't you call a doctor? We have no telephone. Oh, be quick! I—I think he's—dying."

With that she rushed down the hall to a room that shed a feeble light from its door, and disappeared through it, shutting out the vague sounds of someone evidently inarticulate with suffering.

Of course, not being utterly divorced from the humanities by his abstract exist-

ence among the stars, Stanley called a doctor. He did more than that. He ventured into the room where the girl waited, clenching her hands, for the doctor's verdict. He waited there with her until the doctor was gone, shaking his head, and was still there at daybreak when there was little more to do but to summon an undertaker and force the bewildered girl to eat some of the hot breakfast he had sent up to her.

Then he went back to his room, and in the reaction from his nervous, sleepless night washed his hands of the whole affair. He began to consider seriously the comparatively safer discomforts of a hut somewhere among mountains, or in a jungle inaccessible to the habitations of man—and woman.

When he had slept he sat down again to his contemplation of the habits of the good folk of Uranus. His occult vision failed him. It wouldn't reach out over half the millions of miles between his hermitage and the orbit of Uranus. It fell so short as to reach merely to the room down the hall. He saw there the girl of about twenty, with frightened eyes and trembling lips. He saw her disordered hair—a golden tinted, unesthetic sort of hair, falling in an ample cascade over her shoulders.

This vision persisted, with variations. The eyes of the girl, lobelia-blue, seemed at times drowned in a pathetically tearful appeal directed solely at him. In his vision she was alone with her grief.

Cursing a bit, Stanley improved his hermitage-quality of toilet, and stepped down the hallway in the direction of his vision. He found the girl there, silent and tearlessly mournful. She was not quite alone; there was a neighbor, an old woman, with her. As he came in the old woman, evidently glad to be relieved, slipped out murmuring a vague promise to return.

Stanley had no idea of being unkind, but as a hermit he felt he ought to be austere. As a matter of fact he was brutal. He plunged into an inquisition that under any circumstances might have been considered highly indelicate.

"Have you—how are your financial affairs?" he blurted, taking in sweepingly the rather shabby furnishings of the small flat.

The girl answered without resentment.

"I don't know," she said. "I—I don't believe the rent is paid."

"What was your father's business?"

"He used to be a broker."

"He *used* to be—ah, I see. But recently—"

"He didn't do anything. He got caught on the market, or whatever it was."

"Have you any relatives?"

"No one that would care. I wouldn't go to them. They always said father was a gambler."

"Any friends?"

She looked at him mournfully without answering.

"Can you work—have you ever earned your own living?"

She shook her head.

"Father wouldn't let me do anything."

"Have you been to college?"

"No. Father couldn't afford it. But he taught me everything." She indicated with her arm the shelves of rather shabby books at one side of the room.

"Then what the devil do you expect to do—what's going to become of you?"

She shook her head, gazing at him blankly through the tears that sparkled under her lashes.

He gazed back at her thoughtfully until his austerity softened. When he spoke again it was with anxiety. His anxiety was mainly concerned with himself. His chief perplexity seemed to be not what she was going to do but what he was going to do with her. Manifestly she would not be doing *much* for herself.

His austerity returned, and with it a touch of stormy resentment. He strode out of the flat, hunted up the agent, paid the arrearages on the broker's flat, and then sulkily added a couple of months' advance money. He announced that at the end of the week he would give up his own flat.

"Place is too noisy," he explained to the agent.

He bought the casket, arranged for the funeral, conducted it, and paid the bills. He bought the flowers for the funeral, and

he rode in the carriage with the girl. They were the sole mourners.

When it was all over she thanked him shyly. She was afraid of him. He was gruff, as always—perhaps a little more so—and went hastily back to his manuscript-littered den.

He began packing up. He tossed things together viciously. To-morrow he would be on his way—anywhere—probably to the most remote fastness of the Adirondacks.

He slept very badly that night. Perhaps that was because for three days his occult vision had not extended beyond the exasperatingly mundane surface of the earthly sphere.

He arose in the morning in acute discomfort of mind. It had appeared to him during sleepless moments of the night that to desert the friendless, incapable, homeless girl would be impossible. He couldn't get back to the stars with that on his conscience. She must be disposed of—suitably and definitely.

His knock brought her to the door so quickly that he had an uncomfortable feeling she had been waiting to open it.

"I'm going away this afternoon," he announced. "I wanted to come in and say good-bye."

There was a visible tremor of her eyelids, and a mistiness swam across her lobelia-colored glance.

"I'm going to make a stenographer of you. You'll borrow the money from me and you can pay it back, you know, when you've got a job. I'll find you a boarding place, one where they'll take good care of you. You couldn't stay here, you know. There's a nice old lady on the north side who'll do nicely. A motherly sort. And Allington will have to take you when you've learned to punch the keys. Will you like that arrangement?"

It was doubtful if she would from the expression of her eyes, but she nodded.

"I can see that you wouldn't!" he burst out. "You'd rather get married, I suppose, and settle down to raising babies—or poodle dogs!"

His violence of expression surprised even himself. He was more calm—a bit gentler—as he left her at the boarding house, in care of the motherly old landlady.

"Send all the bills to me," were his last words, as he departed for the hermitage.

He telephoned Allington, and was greeted with some ribald remarks about Yogi and the music of the spheres.

"Is she pretty?" Allington inquired, when they came to the subject of the girl.

"Is she— Why, yes, I believe— But what the devil's that got to do with it?"

"All right, all right," chuckled Allington. "I'll take her."

Later Stanley was struck with a brilliant idea, in sequence of this conversation. Allington was a susceptible chap. Maybe he'd be fool enough to marry the girl. Serve him right, and it would be a disencumbrance for the hermitage.

Stanley didn't move. He unpacked his papers and continued with his book. It went slowly, but still it progressed. He found difficulty in getting back into the occult dissociation with things mundane that had been his before the episode of the girl with the lobelia-colored eyes.

The gray-haired landlady sent her bills weekly. She had a habit of making entirely unsolicited reports about her charge.

"She's a dear," she wrote the first time. "Everybody loves her."

Stanley replied with a peremptory command for the elimination of such comment. Handling the bills was in itself distracting enough. He considered putting the whole affair in the hands of an agent.

But the comment continued. It slyly mentioned little romanticisms. The floor-walker, most eligible of all the boarders, was noticeably in love with her. Again, the girl was progressing rapidly at the school of stenography. At last she was ready. Mr. Allington had taken her into the office. She seemed to be satisfactory.

Then there were shy hints about other affairs than business, concerning the girl and Allington. Allington had spent the last Sunday with her, and they had dined down town. If this was not satisfying to Stanley, it was at least interesting.

"She's in love, the little midget," wrote the landlady on the back of her next bill.

Again—"She often speaks of you, but

she says you hate her. She says Mr. Allington tells her you are a woman-hater."

Finally—"I shouldn't be surprised if they'd be eloping one of these days. I thought you ought to know, being a sort of guardian."

The stars kept growing dimmer for Stanley in those days. His occult vision reached more often to the boarding house or to the vacant little flat at the end of the hall, than it did to Uranus. He even pilgrimaged occasionally to the little flat and stood looking mournfully about at the dismal furnishings. Once he thumbed the old books, and found a peculiar interest in childish scrawls on some of the margins. There was a pressed flower between the leaves of one of the books. It was a spray of bluebells. He took it out, and put it between the leaves of one of his own books. Afterwards he wondered what sort of idiocy it was that had prompted such a thing.

Sometimes he wondered, too, what idiocy it was that made him keep on paying the rent of the vacant flat. He answered himself with the feeble argument that it was easier, if more expensive, to do that than to have the furniture stored.

One day he found on a table in the unoccupied flat a pile of his socks. The janitor's wife had taken them that morning to darn. She was very kind to him—unbelievably and almost oppressively kind. She put flowers in his rooms daily, and she was always and forever inquiring for clothes to mend. A most extraordinary janitor's wife! But what had she been prowling here for? He gathered up the socks and took them back to his rooms.

A day or two afterward, when his asceticism was at a very discouraging ebb, he saw Allington and the girl together, He was in the little park for his airing, and they passed in Allington's car. For reasons unexplainable to him this vision was disquieting. He went back to his rooms and found the landlady's weekly bill. It contained the information, too, that he probably wouldn't have to be paying bills much longer.

"Mr. Allington," wrote the old landlady, "has asked her to marry him. She told me about it. She asked my advice, the goose—as if there was any question about what to do. She wanted to know if I thought you would approve of it. I said I thought you'd be tickled to death, and she said she believed you would, too."

Stanley tore the note to bits and littered the floor with it. Then he sat down and began savagely re-reading the last chapter of his book. When he had finished he took the manuscript in both hands and crumpled it into a round ball. He tossed that, too, on the floor and kicked it into a corner. Then he sat down again to reflect upon human happiness and the purposes of life.

Presently he arose, and went down the hall toward the deceased broker's flat. Perhaps he was following the course laid out in a psychic vision.

He opened the door upon a startled young woman with goldish hair and lobelia-colored eyes. She was sitting beside a sewing basket, putting missing buttons on a shirt—very manifestly a shirt the janitor's wife had taken from his rooms that morning.

A peculiar recollection came to Stanley as he strode toward her. He could hear Allington's admission to him at dinner on the day he went into retirement:

"And take my word for it, if you find happiness at all, it's most likely to be in the next room mending your shirt."

He laughed into her upturned eyes as he gently disengaged her hands from needle and thread, and lifted her to her feet.

"Mr. Allington is waiting for me with his car," she reminded him later.

"Good!" cried Stanley, who was among stars he never had discovered in his astral meanderings. "Let him wait. No—better still—we'll let him take us to the minister—and then back to earth!"

It was a long time before Allington dared to confess his share in the plot—a plot, it might be said, to revise Stanley's philosophies of life. It seemed, in the final analysis, that the romanticism between Allington and the girl, as chronicled on the back of the landlady's bills, was nearly, if not wholly, imaginary.

"DURB" AND DESTINY

By DONALD A. KAHN

The newspaperman is first lord of fakers. Sometimes Destiny is on his side; more often it is on the side of the angels.

DURBIN, the telegraph editor, could take news off the wire, edit it to conform to the paper's policy, put it on a typewriter, hold a fairly coherent conversation with a casual visitor, and smoke a corncob pipe, all at one and the same time. This made him a valuable member of the newspaper staff as well as a congenial man to have around the office.

One afternoon, as Durbin was taking and typing a column story about a three-legged calf born in Jasper township, and discussing, between paragraphs, the details of a local burglary with Jenks, the police reporter, Edison, the managing editor, stepped into the little coop that served for the telegraph editor's room and joined in the conversation.

"What's that you're taking?" he asked Durbin. "Anything for the six o'clock extra?" Durbin jammed the tobacco down in his cob, slipped a fresh sheet of copy paper into his typewriter, and spat on the floor, commencing, again, to pound away.

"Three-legged calf born in Jasper township," he responded, between puffs.

"For heaven's sake, Durb, cut it!" objected Edison. "This is the fourth freak that correspondent has sent out this week. He must be hard up, or crazy. Can't you give us something decent, Durb?"

"Of course," replied the telegrapher, sarcastically. "I don't receive the news; I just sit here and make it up as I go along." Good-natured Jenks, he of the police beat, laughed in appreciation of the nightly sally between the telegrapher and his superior.

During a lull on the wire Durbin chanced to glance above him to where part of a stereotype mat, a likeness of King George, patched a hole in the glass partition. The mat suggested to him the idea of fixing up a bogus message and roping Edison in on it. Just as the editor was ready to send it to the composing room, he would put him wise and enjoy a laugh. He winked at Jenks. The clicking of the telegraph receiver commenced once more. It was additional data on the three-legged calf, but the managing editor was unfamiliar with the Morse code. Durbin pulled at his corncob with assumed excitement.

"Hello!" he shouted to Edison. "Here you are! London cablegram says King Frederick of Graustark has kicked the bucket!"

"Just in time for the extra!" rejoiced the managing editor, biting like a fish. "Considerate of him." He leaned over Durbin's shoulder, gulping down the "details" as the telegrapher punched them out on the machine. Durb's imagination and the accompanying typewriter had just reached the matter of funeral arrangements when he was hurriedly called to the telephone by the copy boy. During the moment he was talking Jenks stepped down to the business office to wheedle an advance of five dollars from the chancellor of the exchequer.

"My house on fire!" screamed Durb, rushing from the phone. Grabbing his hat he was out the door and down the street before any one could stop him.

Barton, Durbin's assistant, was summoned from the files room and put in charge of the instrument.

"Get the rest of King Frederick," ordered the editor.

For a moment Barton listened to the dots and dashes. "It's something about a three-legged calf," he stated.

"T'ell with the calf!" exclaimed Edison, impatiently. "We want the rest of the funeral stuff for the extra. Break in on them."

Following instructions, Barton interrupted, and demanded more on the royal funeral. But the sender, taking the request as a joke, threatened to fine the operator.

"Let 'em go!" decreed Edison. "We've got enough to fill a page anyway."

In an incredibly short time Durbin's fake on the death of the Danish monarch was set on the linotypes, cast by the stereotypers, and screwed to the presses. With pictures of the king, the story, red-inked, monopolized the first page of the extra.

Of course no other paper carried this "news." Edison congratulated himself on what he took to be the superiority of his telegraph and cable service. The entire edition, in the hands of the lively newsboys, sold out in a few moments.

"Just my chimney burned out," announced the telegraph editor, presently returning to the office. "Where's Jenks?"

"He left the same time you did," replied Edison. "Why?"

Durbin turned ghastly pale. "Did he put you wise to that Frederick story?" he gasped.

"Sure, we got it—beat 'em all," answered the managing editor. "Didn't you see the extra?"

"Lord!" moaned Durb. "You used that fluke!"

"The fire at his house put him on the blink," observed Barton, not unkindly.

Edison produced a flask and tried to force some whiskey between Durbin's resisting lips.

From the next room the telegraph instrument began to make a noise. Barton, noting Durbin's inability, ran to take charge of it. Presently he returned.

"What the devil is the matter with our wire service?" he demanded of Edison. "They're sending out a cablegram again announcing Frederick's death. I suppose we'll learn, next week, that Columbus has discovered America."

Durbin, hearing the words, sat bolt upright in his chair and wiped beads of cold sweat from his brow. "Thank God," he exclaimed fervently.

IN THE May number: THE FIRST INSTALLMENT *by William David Ball.* A man whose one claim to decency is that he pays his debts is confronted with a debt of twenty years standing. It is more than a money obligation; so much more that it can never be liquidated. His own expressed opinion that the man who incurs such a debt should be tortured—made to pay in installments—is a judgment against himself that his conscience cannot set aside. The first installment is in cold cash.

THE INVISIBLE COMRADE

The mystery of Rogue's Reef is carefully concealed even after the author reveals a physical agent at work; for, if Rex identifies the Invisible Comrade before the sailor's arrival—a point not made clear—the reader requires the last two paragraphs for explanation.

Mr. Pitt skillfully manipulates the reader's conclusions by alternately presenting evidence for and against a supernatural cause. Everything preceding Rex's landing hints a spectral being, except the foregone conclusion that he will solve the mystery that baffled his predecessors. A physical agent is suggested by giving the Invisible Comrade an odor. Smell is ranked lowest of the senses, and being the least influenced by the mind, is the most practical one and not easily misled. Eyes, ears, fingers and tongue may be deceived, but "your nose *knows*." An odor must have a physical stimulus, giving strong proof—in two senses—that Rex's comrade is not a spirit.

Having implied a physical agent, the author presents further evidence of a supernatural one, for, besides explaining the title, the South Sea croon, supported by events, and the hint that Captain Johnson's spirit hovers about, distracts the reader's mind from the implication that an animal body exudes that odor. To be enthralled by the mystery, the reader's thoughts must be diverted from a natural cause, simple when explained, to an apparently inexplainable supernatural one.

After almost convincing the reader, in spite of the bloody footprint, that the reef is ghost-haunted, the author prepares one for the true explanation by making the sick man's comrade visible, although, not to reveal the mystery prematurely, he uses the clever device of connecting this physical being with a fever phantom. Thus the reader, like Rex, finds it all "strange and unintelligible."

The gorilla acts in character, with his sly get-away at the last.

The solution, though plausible, is highly unconvincing. No matter how shy a gorilla might be, it is not a disembodied being, and would have been discovered by some of those keepers, with their eyes and wits fear-sharpened. His invisibility is as artificial as certain stage suppositions, and licenses.

Too, if the gorilla was trained by Captain Johnson, he would not be so uncannily stealthy; much of his natural timidity would be lost and he would go about his work freely. If he had not been trained, and merely imitated what he had watched Captain Johnson do, he would hardly be so efficient and prompt.

—Harriette Wilbur

THE INVISIBLE COMRADE is refreshing, and especially so at this time. The diet of crime and intrigue, sentimentality and wartime morality with which the world has been gormandizing, has become reactionary, and something in a different vein is highly welcome.

This story is wholesome, because it scales the pinnacle of courage while not disregarding fear of the unknown—a naturally human fear without cowardice. It is full of delightful word pictures of places and occurrences, particularly those of the beach, the fever wraiths and the hallucinations of delirium.

The defects in this story are minor.

There is an excess of metaphors, and a tendency, whenever the thought returns to a particular spot, to re-describe that spot. Although the added description is new, yet this is somewhat overdone.....

The author should be commended for making no attempt to describe the manner and methods of the gorilla in performing the various duties. Such an attempt would have branded the story as unreal. Even if the animal were thoroughly trained to perform the acts, it would require human intelligence to direct them. But by keeping the gorilla out of sight, the story "rings true." *—Harriet O. Link.*

MISFORTUNE'S GOLOSHES

MISFORTUNE'S GOLOSHES is an appealing story of a certain lower strata of humanity, which, though considerably above the criminal or the improvident class morally, exists in equally sordid surroundings. An unique occupation is featured—that of spectacularly climbing the facades of tall buildings. The title is interesting, but it is not suitable for the tragic story that follows. Classing incongruous things together is a stimulant to curiosity; but it is also the substance of humor, and the absurdity of Misfortune owning a pair of overshoes, as well as the use of the quaint and comical-sounding word "goloshes," suggests a facetious treatment of material which does not follow. This catchy but confusing title forces the author to preface his story with two stiltedly dignified paragraphs which aim to induce a serious mood in the reader, but which succeed more in making him impatient for the real beginning of the story. In this preface the author stresses the love element of his story; yet Misfortune's Goloshes is not

primarily a tale of love. It is a story of injury, resentment, and temptation; and the motive, or emotion, that governs the crisis, is hatred. The theme is "revenge reacting disastrously on the perpetrator." One easily pictures the two well-contrasted partners, the Spider and Olaf. Their names suggest much: the Spider, a cunning, predatory climber; and Olaf, a blonde adventurer. There is, however, a slight inconsistency in the character of the Spider. He is depicted as entirely lacking in tenderness or any human kindness, yet his reaction to his partner's accident and his concern for Shy Ann's fainting are decent enough. The author does not show why Ann is called Shy. If so named to suggest innate refinement she should be consistently shy throughout the story; whereas she shows this trait only once—where "she looked at him shyly as he pushed the glass across the table to her." Otherwise she shows quite contrary qualities, such as those revealed in her "furious outpourings of wrath against the Spider, to all who would lend an ear—and there were many such—" Passages like this counteract the effect of her name. One does not wonder that Ann fails to resist the temptation to give herself to Olaf. She had motive enough—her craving for sympathy, kindness and diversion, with resentiment at Spider's treatment. Nor can she be blamed for leaving Spider after his brutal attack. But exactly why did she yield to the temptation to let him be killed? This criminal act was inconsistent with her former unselfish decisions. The author had not established that she feared pursuit or the Spider's revenge; nor that she greatly desired the opportunity to marry Olaf legally, since she had already given herself to him. One recalls how, when she first found herself in love with Olaf, she felt "almost sorry" for the Spider; yet now, when the opportunity to allow him to go to his death presents itself, "righteous wrath" overcomes her and she leaves the oil-soaked rubber shoes for him to wear on his dangerous ascent. The climax is caused by the exchange of the goloshes by the partners, whereupon the lover is killed and the Spider escapes, thus disappointing our sympathies, now thoroughly established with Shy Ann and Olaf, but satisfying our sense of justice.—*Velma Van Nest Walder.*

It is perfectly obvious that, in this story, Mr. Carl Clausen has deliberately, and with malice aforethought, made an ineffectual snatch at the coveted laurels of O. Henry. The effort in itself is praiseworthy; but Mr. Clausen has carelessly allowed himself to wander over into the territory of the fanniehurst, dragging a rather crudely constructed plot after him.....

In the first place, while it is certain that Ann hated her husband, there is nothing that would make us believe she had actual murder in her heart. It was the bottle of oil hurled at her which gave rise to that inspiration. Now, had the scrap leading up to the hurling of that bottle been over Olaf, it would have knitted the plot incidents closer together. As it is, the incident is unconnected, its cause and effect at variance with each other. The Spider would probably have thrown the bottle at his wife, Olaf or no Olaf, and she might have had the same inspiration whether he was planning to run away or not. Therefore, so far as the murder element is concerned, Olaf is structurally superfluous.....

The opening paragraphs which promise us a "tale of love, crimson with sin, unadorned, ugly," and a little stroll where we can hear "the soft swish of seraph's wings in gloomy chambers," promise a little too much. Not once could we distinguish a single swish.—*G. E Fort.*

THE AMBITION OF PIERRE MICHEL

The Ambition of Pierre Michel is a story so full of charm that it wins its way in spite of a number of minor faults. I call them minor faults, because they will appear so to the casual reader; and yet they are bound up with the very warp and woof of the structure. To begin at the beginning, I should criticise the title for its commonplaceness; for the beauty of the story is a sort of spiritual essence, far removed from the ideas called to mind by the word "ambition." A subtler title is demanded first of all. The author has evidently gathered thoughtfully, bit by bit, a quantity of interesting material about her lovable Pierre and Ann, which she really ought not to have expended on the limited field of the short story, but ought to have saved for the slower preparation permissable in a character novel or novelette. One would not willingly dispense with any of the interesting facts of Pierre's pathetic attempts to fit his very round personality into the very angular niche of rocky, rigid Maine; but, if the author really must try to make a short story out of Pierre, she certainly must be more selective. Two thirds of a short story can not be devoted to a slow approach to the main situations, the characters have to be more casually handled, more briefly explained and introduced. To be quite specific, the story has just two phases: (1) how Peter got his tendencies; and (2) how those tendencies functioned in the real issues of life. Is not the former phase overbalanced? And yet—the story

is full from beginning to end of the beauty of nature and the beauty of the human soul; of the most interesting struggle in the world, that of the alien spirit trying to adjust itself to environment and circumstances; and of the most heroic of all victories, the giving up of the sweetness of life for one's brother. Shall we change the requirements of the short story technique—or shall we change the story to fit the requirements?—*Mrs. John Rush Powell.*

WHAT THE NEVA KNOWS

All in all, the January BLACK CAT has but one story which really contains the thrill unobscured..... WHAT THE NEVA KNOWS is the most readable story in the whole magazine. There is no obscurity there. It is a work of art; and genius bristles from every paragraph. You are scarcely conscious you are reading a story. Words and hinted at situations do not trip you up. You immediately become acquainted with Petro and before many words pass you meet with Betta of the dirty tea house. Of course, she is not admirable; but you do sympathize with the love affair. You no more than begin to grow interested in this than the girl is most surprisingly murdered by her lover's hand. Then you sense along with Petro the enormity of the crime and penalty. Strange to say, you may wish to see him safely hide the body and make his escape. Then comes the terrible battle with the rats and the, perhaps, well-merited punishment. One cannot admire so morbid a story for the sake of pleasurable reading: but one can not help but admire the manner in which it is told.—*Robert M. Crooks.*

Note: It is not necessary to criticise every story in this number; nor are you limited to one. Each criticism should be as nearly as possible in the form of a finished essay. It may be breezy and whimsical, or a severely plain exposition; but it should be more than a synopsis, and it must not exceed five hundred words. Criticisms should be mailed to the BLACK CAT not later than the tenth of the month following the month of issue; i. e., criticisms of this number (April) should be mailed not later than May 10. *The best criticisms will be paid for at the rate of one cent per word* and will be published, with the names of the authors, in the third issue following, which in this case will be the July number. In preparing criticisms, write on one side of the paper only. The name and address should be written at the top of the first sheet of each criticism, and the number of words in each criticism should also be written at the top of the first sheet.

The "OPEN DOOR" For WRITERS

The very authors whose stories are most in demand by magazine editors today started their careers by writing stories for the BLACK CAT. Among them are Rupert Hughes, Alice Hegan Rice, Harry Stilwell Edwards, Will N. Harben, Geraldine Bonner, Sewell Ford, Holman Day, Cleveland Moffett, Juliet Wilbur Thompkins, Ellis Parker Butler, Susan Glaspell, and, to mention some of the more recent arrivals among the top-notchers, James Francis Dwyer, Ida M. Evans, Hapsburg Liebe, William Hamilton Osborne, William J. Neidig, and Octavus Roy Cohen.

The BLACK CAT is always at the door to welcome the young writer into the ranks of the professionals. It is always ready to publish the work of the young writer who shows promise, who comes to the front with fresh ideas and the conviction that the "gods have called him."

There is no better way to learn to write than by analyzing the work of other writers. Thus, it was to help the aspiring writer to a quicker understanding of short-story principles that the BLACK CAT CLUB was formed and made a regular feature of the magazine. The idea of the CLUB is simple: It offers the writer an opportunity to master technique by study and criticism of BLACK CAT stories. These criticisms are the writer's "finger exercises." Each month the best critical essays are published with the names of the authors, *and paid for at the rate of one cent per word.* Membership is open to all who subscribe to the magazine. Several members have had stories published in the BLACK CAT and other magazines since joining the CLUB. By studying stories that *have sold* you may learn to write stories that *will sell.* That is the logical and only way. Enroll today.

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The Secret of Being a Convincing Talker

How I Learned It in One Evening

By GEORGE RAYMOND

"HAVE you heard the news about Frank Jordan?"

This question quickly brought me to the little group which had gathered in the center of the office. Jordan and I had started with the Great Eastern Machinery Co., within a month of each other, four years ago. A year ago Jordan was taken into the accounting division and I was sent out as salesman. Neither of us was blessed with an unusual degree of brilliancy, but we "got by" in our new jobs well enough to hold them.

Imagine my amazement, then, when I heard:

"Jordan's just been made Treasurer of the Company!"

I could hardly believe my ears. But there was the "Notice to Employees" on the bulletin board, telling about Jordan's good fortune.

Now I knew that Jordan was a capable fellow, quiet, and unassuming, but I never would have picked him for any such sudden rise. I knew too that the Treasurer of the Great Eastern had to be a big man, and I wondered how in the world Jordan landed the place.

The first chance I got, I walked into Jordan's new office, and after congratulating him warmly, I asked him to let me "in" on the details of how he jumped ahead so quickly. His story is so intensely interesting that I am going to repeat it as closely as I remember:

"I'll tell you just how it happened, George, because you may pick up a pointer or two that will help *you*.

"You remember how scared I used to be whenever I had to talk to the chief? You remember how you used to tell me that every time I opened my mouth I put my foot into it, meaning of course that every time I spoke I got into trouble? You remember when Ralph Sinton left to take charge of the Western office and I was asked to present him with the loving cup the boys gave him, how flustered I was and how I couldn't say a word because there were people around? You remember how confused I used to be every time I met new people? I couldn't say what I wanted to say when I wanted to say it; and I determined that if there was any possible chance to learn how to talk I was going to do it.

"The first thing I did was to buy a number of books on public speaking, but they seemed to be meant for those who wanted to become orators, whereas what I wanted to learn was not only how to speak in public but how to speak to individuals under various conditions in business and social life.

"A few weeks later, just as I was about to give up hope of ever learning how to talk interestingly, I read an announcement stating that Dr. Frederick Houk Law of New York University had just completed a new course in business talking and public speaking entitled 'Mastery of Speech.' The course was offered on approval without money in advance, so since I had nothing whatever to lose by examining the lessons, I sent for them and in a few days they arrived. I glanced through the entire eight lessons, reading the headings and a few paragraphs here and there, and in about an hour the whole secret of effective speaking was opened to me.

"For example, I learned why I had always lacked confidence, why talking had always seemed something to be dreaded whereas it is really the simplest thing in the world to 'get up and talk.' I learned how to secure complete attention to what I was saying and how to make everything I said interesting, forceful and convincing. I learned the art of listening, the value of silence, and the power of brevity. Instead of being funny at the wrong time, I learned how and when to use humor with telling effect.

"But perhaps the most wonderful thing about the lessons were the actual examples of what things to say and when to say them to meet every condition. I found that there was a knack in making oral reports to my superiors. I found that there was a right way and a wrong way to present complaints, to give estimates, and to issue orders.

"I picked up some wonderful pointers about how to give my opinions, about how to answer complaints, about how to ask the bank for a loan, about how to ask for extensions. Another thing that struck me forcibly was that, instead of antagonizing people when I didn't agree with them, I learned how to bring them around to my way of thinking in the most pleasant sort of way. Then, of course, along with those lessons there were chapters on speaking before large audiences, how to find material for talking and speaking, how to talk to friends, how to talk to servants, and how to talk to children.

"Why, I got the secret the very first evening and it was only a short time before I was able to apply all of the principles and found that my words were beginning to have an almost magical effect upon everybody to whom I spoke. It seemed that I got things done instantly, where formerly, as you know, what I said went 'in one ear and out the other.' I began to acquire an executive ability that surprised me. I smoothed out difficulties like a true diplomat. In my talks with the chief I spoke clearly, simply, convincingly. Then came my first promotion since I entered the accounting department. I was given the job of answering complaints, and I made good. From that I was given the job of making collections. When Mr. Buckley joined the Officers Training Camp, I was made Treasurer. Between you and me, George, my salary is now $7500 a year and I expect it will be more from the first of the year.

"And I want to tell you sincerely, that I attribute my success solely to the fact that I learned how to talk to people."

******

When Jordan finished, I asked him for the address of the publishers of Dr. Law's Course and he gave it to me. I sent for it and found it to be exactly as he had stated. After studying the eight simple lessons I began to sell to people who had previously refused to listen to me at all. After four months of record breaking sales during the dullest season of the year, I received a wire from the chief asking me to return to the home office. We had quite a long talk in which I explained how I was able to break sale records—and I was appointed Sales Manager at almost twice my former salary. I know that there was nothing in me that had changed except that I had acquired the ability to talk where formerly I simply used "words without reason." I can never thank Jordan enough for telling me about Dr. Law's Course in Business Talking and Public Speaking. Jordan and I are both spending all our spare time making public speeches on war subjects and Jordan is being talked about now as Mayor of our little Town.

So confident is the Independent Corporation, publishers of "Mastery of Speech," Dr. Law's Course in Business Talking and Public Speaking, that once you have an opportunity to see in your own home how you can, in one hour, learn the secret of speaking and how you can apply the principles of effective speech under all conditions, that they are willing to send you the Course on free examination.

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